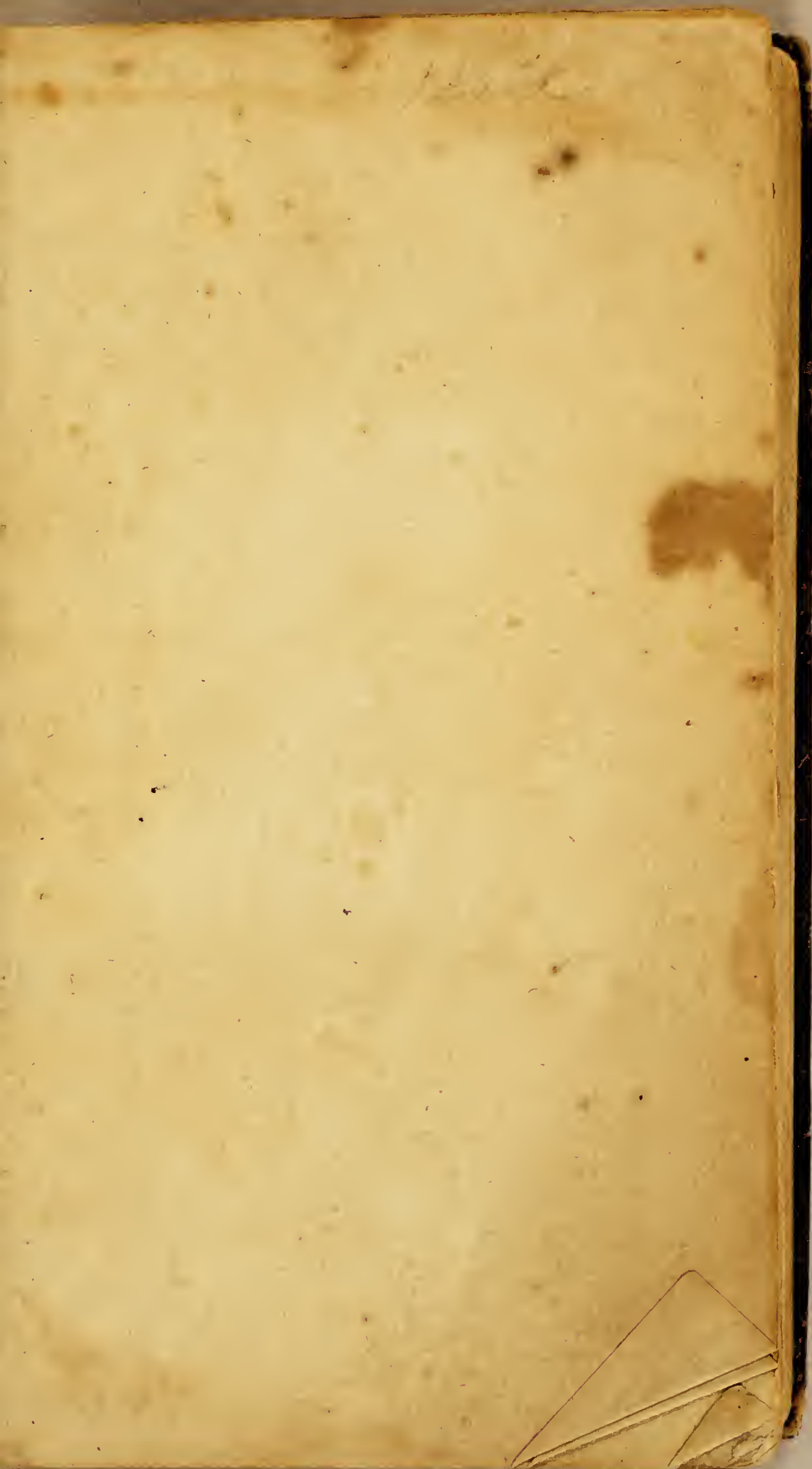


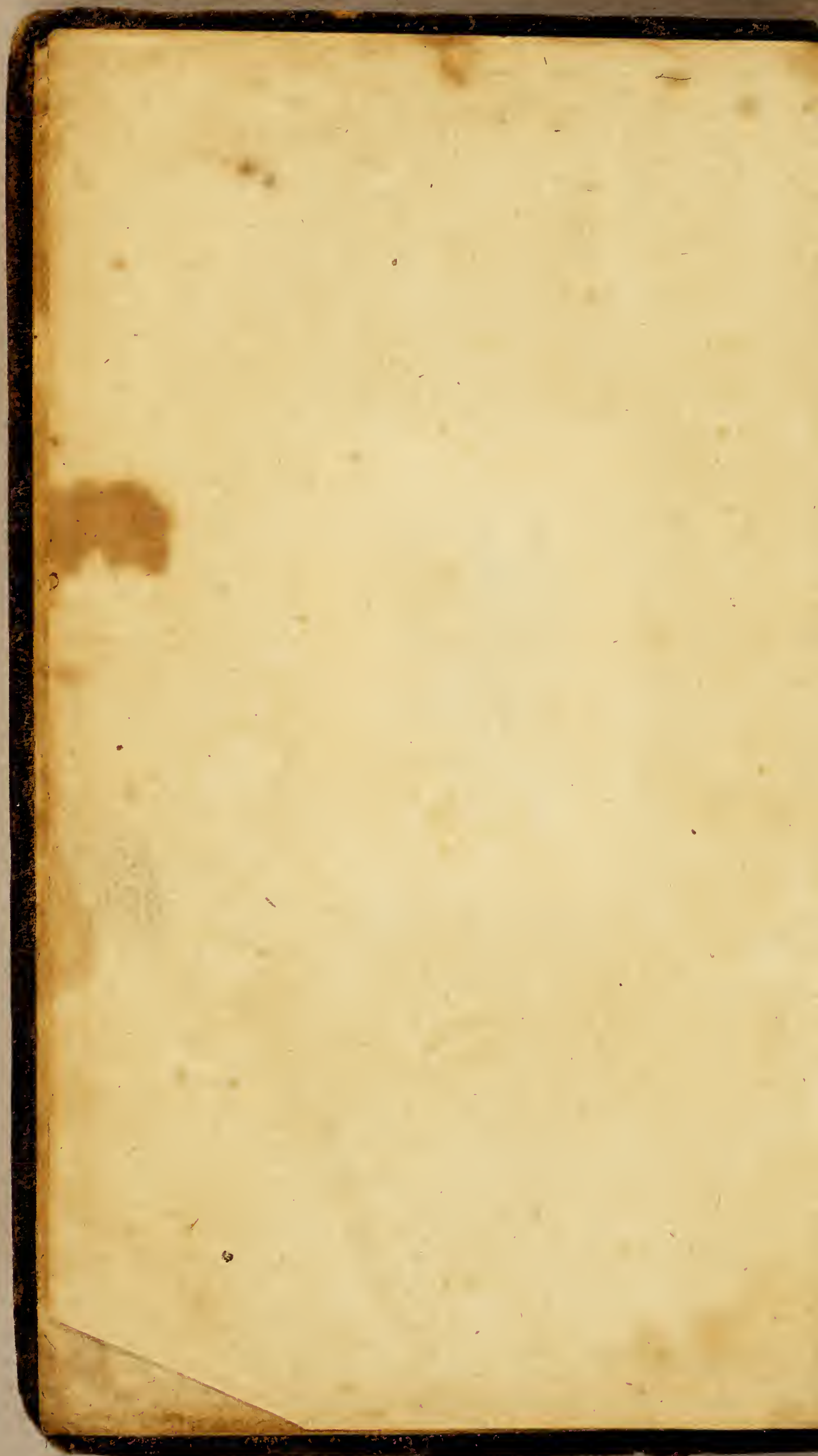


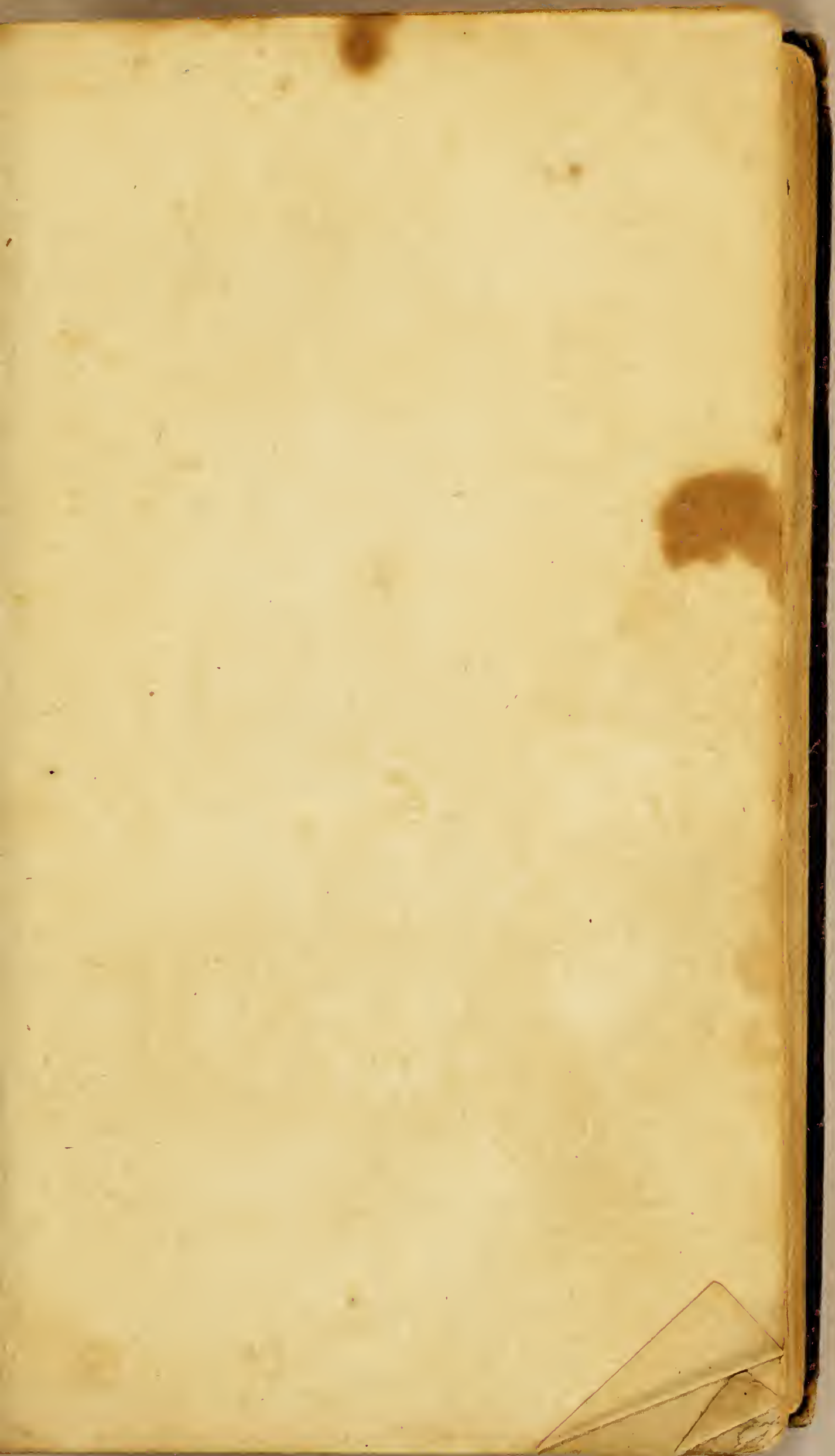


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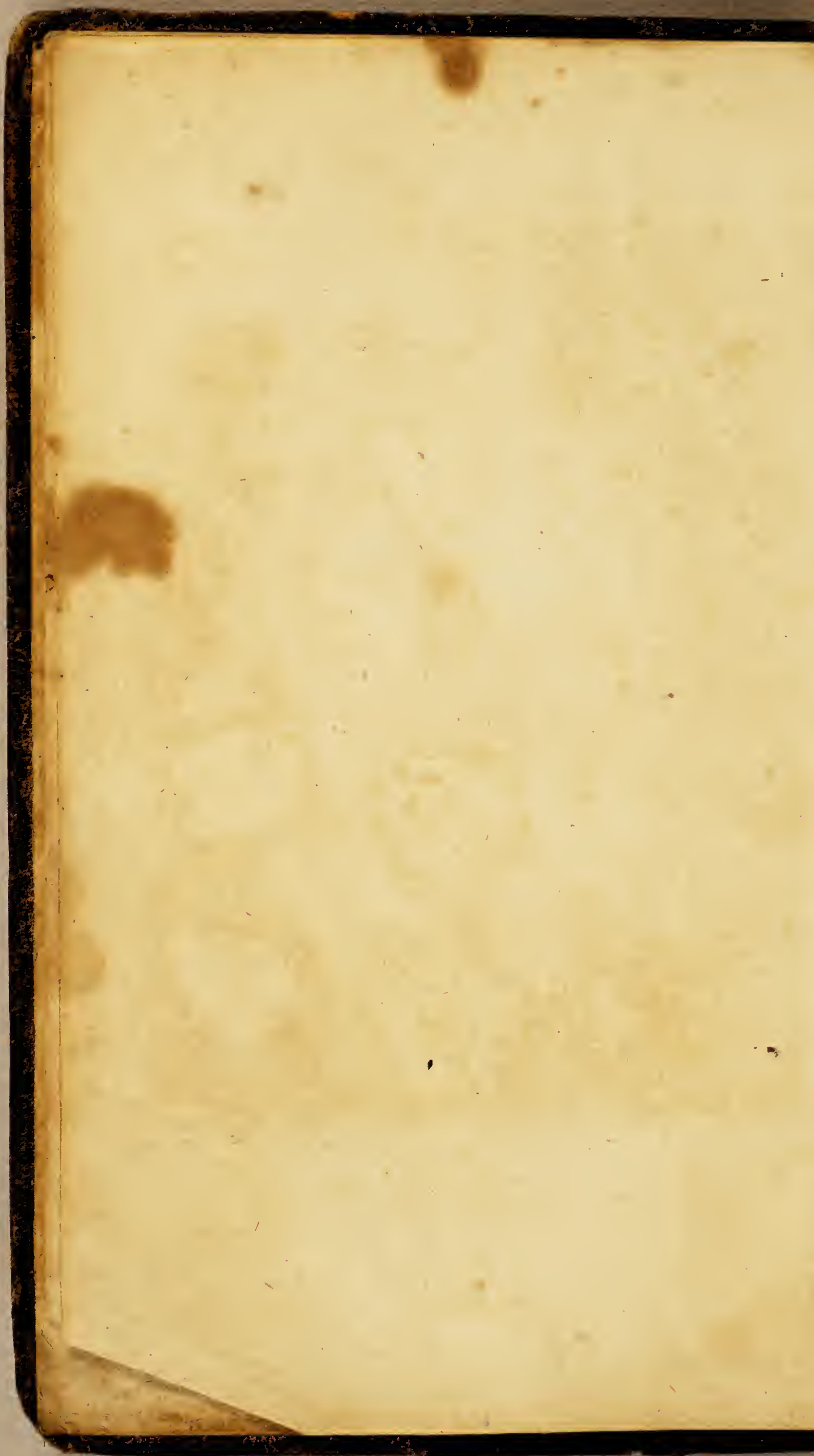












RPJC



FRONTISPIECE.



Seales, sc.

SOCIETY in SOLITUDE.



# S O L I T U D E

CONSIDERED, WITH

RESPECT TO ITS INFLUENCE

UPON

THE MIND AND THE HEART.

WRITTEN ORIGINALLY IN GERMAN,

BY M. ZIMMERMANN,

AULIC COUNSELLOR AND PHYSICIAN TO HIS  
BRITANNIC MAJESTY AT HANOVER.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH OF

J. B. MERCIER.

---

SOLITUDE où je trouve une douceur secrète  
Lieux que j'aimai toujours, ne pourrai-je jamais,  
Loin du monde et du bruit, goûter l'ombre et le  
frais ?

Oh ! qui m'arrêtera sous vos sombres asyles ?  
Quand pourront les Neuf Sœurs, loin des Cours  
et des Villes,

M'occuper tout entier — LA FONTAINE,  
*Le Songe d'un Habitant du Mogol,*  
L. XI. Fable IV.

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RPJCH



P R E F A C E  
OF THE  
FRENCH TRANSLATOR.

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THE Title of this work will perhaps give some alarm to delicate ears: the word "SOLITUDE" may inspire melancholy and unfavourable ideas; it is however only necessary to read a few pages to be undeceived. The author is not one of those extravagant *Misânthropes* who would compel mankind; born for Society, and connected with it by a variety of indissoluble ties, to retire into forests, to inhabit dens and caves, and to live only with wild beasts; he is a friend to humanity; a sensible and virtuous individual, an honest citizen, honoured by the esteem of his Prince, who endeavours to enlighten the minds of his fellow-creatures upon a subject the most interesting to them,—the attainment of HAPPINESS.



No writer ever appeared more completely satisfied that man is born for Society, or seems to have better studied all the social duties of life, than M. ZIMMERMANN. But what is Society? what are the social duties of life? These are the questions which the author examines. The important characters of Father, Husband, Son, and Citizen, impose on MAN certain indispensable obligations which are ever dear to the virtuous heart; they establish between him, his country and his family, relations too necessary and too agreeable to be neglected. It is not however in tumultuous joys, in the noisy pleasures of public entertainments, in blindly following the chimeras of ambition, the illusions of self-love, or the speculations of desire, that men must expect to feel the charms of those reciprocal ties which unite them to Society; to perceive the dignity of those duties which nature made productive of so many pleasures; to taste that true felicity which is accompanied by independence and content; a felicity so seldom desired only because it is so little known, but which every man may cultivate within his own breast.

ALAS! who has not frequently experienced the necessity of entering into that sacred asylum as a refuge from the misfortunes of life, or as a relief from the fatigues of satiated pleasures? Yes, all men, from the sordid schemer who daily sinks under the weight of his labours, to the proud statesman intoxicated by the incense of popular applause, experience the desire of terminating their precarious career; every bosom feels an anxiety for repose; every mind fondly wishes to steal from the vortex of a busy and unquiet life,



to enjoy tranquility in the Solitude of retirement. Under the peaceful shades of Solitude, the mind of man regenerates, and his faculties acquire new force; it is there alone that the happy can enjoy the fullness of felicity, or the miserable forget his woe; it is there that the bosom of sensibility experiences its most delicious emotions; that creative genius frees itself from the shackles of Society, and darts forth the warmest rays of imagination: all the ideas of our minds, every inclination of our hearts, lean toward this desired goal. "There is indeed," says a sensible Englishman, "scarcely any writer who has not  
"celebrated the happiness of rural privacy, and  
"delighted himself and his readers with the  
"melody of birds, the whisper of groves, and the  
"murmur of rivulets; nor any man eminent for  
"extent of capacity, or greatness of exploits,  
"that has not left behind him some memorials  
"of lonely wisdom and silent dignity."

The part of the work to which I am most attached is particularly addressed to the attention of youth; it is to them that it will perhaps be most useful, and I fondly flatter myself that to their minds it will also afford the highest pleasure. Young myself, and sensible of the truly beautiful, I felt myself led on by the charms of a work which elevated my mind, warmed my imagination, and touched my heart. May it produce the same effects upon my young countrymen! May it, notwithstanding the weakness of this translation, inspire them with the same enthusiasm! At least I may venture to exclaim in the words of M. Zimmermann, "Dear and virtuous young man, into whose hands this book



“ perchance may fall, receive with affection the  
“ good which it contains, and reject all that is  
“ cold and bad ; all that does not touch and pe-  
“ netrate the heart ; but if you thank me for the  
“ performance, if you bless me, if you acknow-  
“ ledge that I have enlightened your mind, cor-  
“ rected your manners, and tranquilized your  
“ heart, I shall congratulate myself on the sin-  
“ cerity of my intentions, and think my labours  
“ richly rewarded. If, in pursuing it, you find  
“ yourself able to justify your inclination for a  
“ wise and active Solitude, your aversion from  
“ those societies which only serve to destroy time,  
“ and your repugnance to employ vile and shame-  
“ ful means in the acquisition of riches, I shall  
“ ask no other benediction for my work.”

It will perhaps appear surprising that, enter-  
taining so high a veneration for the writings of  
M. ZIMMERMANN; I could permit myself with  
profane hand to retrench the greater part of his  
work : permit me therefore to disclose the rea-  
sons which influenced my conduct. Four large  
volumes on the subject of SOLITUDE appeared  
to me to be a work too arduous for the generali-  
ty of French readers, and particularly for French  
booksellers to undertake ; for even this short  
Essay, without the recommendation of M. LE  
TOURNEUR, could not have acquired the *honour*  
*of the press*. Beside, although the whole work  
bears the marks of genius, and the two first vo-  
lumes, which principally treat of *monastic Solitude*,  
contain without doubt many judicious reflections,  
yet they are perhaps rather too long for many  
readers, and are even capable of displeasing some,  
whose narrow prejudices might be shocked by the



liberal sentiments of the Author, who has appealed to the decision of REASON alone upon the subject of certain abuses rendered sacred by the motives from which they proceeded. Notwithstanding this, however, I could not determine to retrench the work before I had consulted several men of letters, of enlightened understandings, and in high favour with the public: No, I never could have ventured, on my own judgment, to have pruned any part of a work which has acquired the universal approbation of the German Empire\*, and obtained the suffrages of an Empress celebrated for the superior brilliancy of her mind, and who has signified her approbation in the most flattering manner.

On the 26th of January 1785, a Courier, dispatched by the Russian Envoy at Hamburg, presented M. ZIMMERMANN with a small casket in the name of her Majesty the Empress of Russia. The casket contained a ring enriched with diamonds of an extraordinary size and lustre, and a gold medal, bearing on one side the portrait of the Empress, and on the other the date of the happy reformation of the Russian Empire. This present the Empress accompanied with a letter written in her own hand, containing these remarkable words: "To M. ZIMMERMANN, Counsellor of State and Physician to his Britannic Majesty, to thank him for the excellent precepts he has given to mankind in his Treatise upon SOLITUDE."

\* The Author is already inserted in the collection of Classic Authors printed at *Carlsruhe*.

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# S O L I T U D E

CONSIDERED, WITH

RESPECT TO ITS INFLUENCE

UPON

THE MIND AND THE HEART.

---

## *CHAPTER THE FIRST.*

### INTRODUCTION.

**I**N this unquiet and tumultuous scene of life, surrounded by the restraints of ceremony, the urgencies of business, the shackles of society, and in the evening of my days, I feel no delight in tracing back the images of pleasures that pass so transiently away: my soul dwells with higher satisfaction on the memory of those happy days of my youth, when SOLITUDE was my sole amusement; when I knew no place more agreeable than the sequestered cloister and the silent cell, the lonely mountain and the sublimely awful grove; nor any pleasures more lively than those I experienced in conversing with the dead.



I love to recall to my mind the cool and silent scenes of Solitude; to oppose them to the heat and bustle of the world; to meditate on those advantages which the great and good of every age have acknowledged they possess, though perhaps too seldom experienced; to reflect on the powerful consolations they afford when grief corrodes the mind, when disease afflicts the body, when the number of our years bends us to the ground; to contemplate, in short, the benign influence of Solitude upon all the troubles of the heart.

SOLITUDE is that state in which the soul freely resigns itself to its own reflections. The sage, therefore, who banishes from his mind all recollection of the objects by which he is surrounded, and retires within himself, is not less solitary than he who forsakes society and devotes himself entirely to the calm enjoyments of a lonely life.

In retirement every man surrenders himself, without restraint or limitation, to the guidance of his own ideas, and implicitly adopts the sentiments which his taste, temper, inclination, and genius, inspire.

Observe the shepherds of those extensive deserts: one chaunts the beauty which captivates his soul; another moulds the clay into a rustic vase; the surrounding charms of nature form the sole delight and admiration of a third; while a fourth investigates the precepts of the moral law, or contemplates the sublime truths of our holy religion. If they were respectively to meet a lovely shepherdess beneath the shades of their retirement, seated on the borders of some gently flowing stream, the heart of each might perhaps become the slave of love; but deprived of all



that is dear to man, and doomed to taste involuntary Solitude, the best resource for each is to resign himself to the dictates of his inclination: a resource to which every well-disposed and virtuous mind may constantly resort without dismay or danger.

MAN in a state of perfect freedom possesses an innate right to follow the suggestions of his fancy: some are delighted by the soft melody of the nightingale, while others listen with equal pleasure to the hideous shriekings of the owl. Some there are to whom even the visits of friendship are displeasing; who, to avoid the painful intercourse, confine themselves eternally at home, and consume their hours in writing books, or killing flies.

The poor dejected heart constantly attaches itself to some favourite object, as far at least as circumstances and situation will permit, from which it draws its consolation and support. Roaming through the cloisters of the *Magdalene Convent* at HIDELSHEIM, I was surprised to observe an aviary of Canary birds in the cell of a RELIGIEUSE. A Brabancon gentleman, fearful of the effects of cold, and having the same aversion from WOMEN that certain persons are said to feel from MICE, lived five and twenty years at BRUSSELS immured within his house, without any other amusement than that of collecting a magnificent cabinet of paintings and pictures.

Under the confinement even of the dungeon itself, men, deprived for ever of their liberty, endeavour to beguile the Solitude in which they are forced to live, by devoting their thoughts, as far as they are able, to those pursuits which afford them the highest pleasure. The Swiss



philosopher MICHAEL DUCRET measured the heights of the Alps during his confinement in the prison of AARBURG, in the canton of BERNE in SWISSERLAND; and while BARON DE TRENCK, a prisoner in the tower of MAGDEBOURG, was every moment anxiously employed in forming projects to effect his escape: GENERAL WALRAVE, the companion of his captivity, contentedly passed his time in the feeding of chickens.

The term SOLITUDE does not, I conceive, always import a total absence from the world. Sometimes it conveys to my mind the idea of dwelling in a convent, or a country village: sometimes I understand it to mean the library of a man of learning: and sometimes an occasional retreat from the tumults of active life.

Men are frequently Solitary without being alone; for to constitute a state of Solitude, it is sufficient if the mind be entirely absorbed by those ideas which its own reflections create.

The haughty BARON, proud of the distinctions of birth, feels himself alone in every society whose members are not ennobled by an equal number of titles derived through a long line of hereditary descents. A profound reasoner is, in general, Solitary at the tables of the witty and the gay. The mind, even amidst the clamours of a popular assembly, may withdraw its attention from the surrounding objects, may retire as effectually within itself, may become as Solitary as a monk in his monastery or a hermit in his cell. In short, Solitude may be as easily attained amidst the gayest circles of the most brilliant city, as in the uninterrupted silence of a poor, deserted village; at LONDON and at PARIS, as



well as on the plains of THEBAIS or in the deserts of NITRIA.

A treatise therefore upon the real advantages to be derived from Solitude, appeared to me a proper means to assist men in their search after happiness. The fewer external resources men possess, the greater efforts they make to discover in themselves the power of being happy; and the more they are enabled to part, without regret, from their connections with each other, the nearer they most certainly approach to true felicity. The pleasures of the world appear to me unworthy of the avidity with which they are pursued; but it is equally true, that, upon a serious examination, all those *Catholic* notions, once so celebrated; of a total seclusion from the world and its concerns, appear altogether impracticable, and equally absurd. To render the mind independent of human assistance, and teach it to rely entirely upon the strength of its own powers, is, I acknowledge, a noble exertion; but it is certainly as meritorious to learn the art of living happily in the bosom of society, and of rendering ourselves useful and agreeable to the rest of mankind.

While, therefore, I describe the allurements of SOLITUDE, I shall endeavour to warn my readers against those dangerous excesses into which some of its disciples have been betrayed; excesses as repugnant to the voice of reason, as they are condemned by the precepts of our holy religion.

Happily to avoid all the dangers by which my subject is surrounded, to sacrifice nothing to prejudice, to advance nothing in violation of truth, to obtain the approbation of the peaceful disciples of reason and philosophy, will be my anxious



endeavour; and if affliction shall derive a ray of consolation from my labours; if melancholy, in forgetting the horrors of its situation, shall raise its dejected head to bless me: if I shall be able to convince the innocent votaries of rural retirement that the springs of pleasure soon dry up in the heat of the metropolis; that the heart remains cold and senseless in the midst of all its noisy and factitious joys: if they shall learn to feel the superior pleasures of a country life, become sensible of the variety of resources they afford against idleness and vexation; what purity of sentiment, what peaceful thoughts, what unfading happiness the view of verdant meads, the sight of numerous flocks and herds quitting the fertile meadows on the close of day, instil into the mind; with what ineffable delight the sublime beauty of a wild romantic country, interspersed with distant cottages, and occupied by freedom and content, ravishes the soul; how much more readily, in short, we forget all the pains and troubles of a wounded heart on the borders of a gentle stream, than amidst the concourse of deceitful joys so fatally followed in the courts of princes, my task will be accomplished, and all my wishes amply gratified!



## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

## THE GENERAL ADVANTAGES OF SOLITUDE.

SOLITUDE engages the affections of men, whenever it holds up a picture of tranquility to their view. The doleful and monotonous sound of the clock of a sequestered monastery, the silence of nature in a still night, the pure air on the summit of a high mountain, the thick darkness of an ancient forest, the sight of a temple fallen into ruins, inspire the soul with a soft melancholy, and banish all recollection of the world and its concerns. But the man who cannot hold a friendly correspondence with his own heart, who derives no comfort from the reflections of his mind, who dreads the idea of meditation, and is fearful of passing a single moment with himself, looks with an equal eye on Solitude and on death. He endeavours to enjoy all the voluptuousness which the world affords; drains the pernicious cup of pleasure to its dregs; and until the dreadful moment approaches when he beholds his nerves shattered, and all the powers of his soul destroyed, he has not courage to make the delayed confession, "*I am tired of THE WORLD and all its idle follies, and now prefer the mournful shade of the cypress to the intoxication of its noisy pleasures and tumultuous joys.*"

The dangers to which a life of Solitude is exposed, for even in Solitude many real dangers exist, afford no substantial argument against it;



as by a judicious employment of the hours of activity and repose, and a proper vigilance upon the desires of the heart, they may be easily eluded. The adventurous navigator; when acquainted with the signal of approaching dangers, and the situation of those rocks and shoals which threaten his safety, no longer fears the perils to which he was before exposed. The advantages of Solitude are still less disproved by the complaints of those who, feeling a continual desire to escape from themselves, are incapable of every enjoyment but what the world affords; to whom retirement and tranquility appear vapid and fatiguing; and who, unconscious of any nobler pleasure than that of paying or receiving visits, have of course no idea of the delights of Solitude.

It is, therefore, only to those distinguished beings who can resort to their own bosoms for an antidote against disquiet, who are fearless of the numerous sacrifices which virtue may demand, whose souls are endowed with sufficient energy to drive away the dread of being alone, and whose hearts are susceptible of the pure and tranquil delights of domestic felicity, that I pretend to recommend the advantages of SOLITUDE. The miserable being in whose bosom the corruptions of the world have already destroyed these precious gifts of nature; who knows no other pleasure, is sensible to no other happiness than what cards or the luxury of a richly-furnished table afford; who disdains all exercise of the understanding, thinks all delicacy of sentiment unnatural, and, by a brutality almost inconceivable, laughs at the sacred name of sensibility; must be lost to virtue, and utterly incapable of pleasure from any operations of his own mind.



Philosophers, and ministers of the gospel, if they were entirely to deprive themselves of the pleasures of society, and to shun, with rigid severity, the honest comforts and rational amusements of life, would, without doubt, essentially injure the interests of wisdom and virtue; but there are not, at present, many preceptors who carry their doctrines to this extent: on the contrary, there exists a multitude, both in the country and the town, to whom Solitude would be insupportable, who shamefully devote their time to noisy dissipations and tumultuous pleasures altogether inconsistent with their characters and functions. The celebrated æra is passed when a life of retirement and contemplation was alone esteemed, and when the approaches to heaven were measured in proportion as the mind receded from its attachments to the world.

After having examined the influence of Solitude upon the general habits of life, and upon those ordinary pleasures which are pursued with such unceasing avidity, I shall shew, in the first division of this Chapter, that it enables MAN to live independent and alone; that there is no misfortune it cannot alleviate, no sorrow that it will not soften; that it adds dignity to his character, and gives fresh vigour to the powers of his mind; that he cannot, in any other situation, acquire so perfect a knowledge of himself; that it enlarges the sphere of attention, and ripens the seeds of judgment: in short, that it is from the influence of Solitude alone that man can hope for the fruition of unbroken pleasures and never-fading felicity.

THE ENJOYMENTS of active life may be blended with the most ordinary and Solitude; and we shall soon discover



foundations the opinions of those philosophers are built, who maintain that the tumults of the world, and the dissipation of its votaries, are incompatible with the calm exercise of reason, the decisions of a sober judgment, the investigation of truth, and the study of the human heart.

The legion of fantastic fashions to which a man of pleasure is obliged to sacrifice his time, impairs the rational faculties of his mind, and destroys the native energies of his soul. Forced continually to lend himself to the performance of a thousand little triflings, a thousand mean absurdities, he becomes by habit frivolous and absurd. The face of things no longer wears its true and genuine aspect; and his depraved taste loses all relish for rational entertainment or substantial pleasure. The infatuation seizes on his brain, and his corrupted heart teems with idle fancies and vain imaginations. These illusions, however, through which the plainest object comes distorted to his view, might easily be dispelled. Accustomed to a lonely life, and left to reflect in calmness and sobriety, during the silence of the Solitary hour, upon the false joys and deceitful pleasures which the parade of visiting and the glare of public entertainments offer to our view, he would soon perceive and candidly acknowledge their nothingness and insipidity: soon would he behold the pleasures of the world in their true colours, and feel that he had blindly wandered in pursuit of phantoms; possessing something in appearance, but nothing in reality.

Langour and dissatisfaction are ever the inevitable consequences of this ardent pursuit of entertainments and diversions. He who has drained the cup of pleasure to its last drop; who is



obliged to confess that his hopes are fled, and that the world no longer contains an object worthy of his pursuit; who feels disappointments and disgust mingled with all his enjoyments; who seems astonished at his own insensibility; who no longer possesses the magic of the enchantress IMAGINATION to gild and decorate the scene; calls in vain to his assistance the daughters of sensuality; their caresses can no longer charm his dark and melancholy mind; the soft and syren song of luxury no longer can dispel the cloud of discontent which hovers round his head.

Behold yon weak old man, his mind enervated and his constitution gone, running after pleasures that he no more must taste. The airs of gaiety which he affects render him ridiculous. His attempts to shine expose him to derision. His endeavours to display the wit and eloquence of youth, betray him into the garrulity of old age. His conversation filled with repetitions and fatiguing narrative, creates disgust, and only forces the smile of pity from the lips of his youthful rivals. To the eye of wisdom however, that saw him through all the former periods of his life, sparkling in all the circles of folly, and rioting in the noisy rendezvous of extravagance and vice, his character always appeared the same.

The wise man in the midst of the most tumultuous pleasures, frequently retires within himself, and silently compares what he might do with what he is doing. Surrounded even by the excesses of intoxication, he associates only with those warm and generous souls, whose highly elevated minds are drawn towards each other by wishes the most virtuous and sentiments the most sublime. The silence of Solitude has more than



once given birth to enterprizes of the greatest importance and utility; and some of the most celebrated actions of mankind were perhaps first inspired among the sounds of music, or conceived in the mazes of the dance. Sensible and elevated minds never commune more closely with themselves than in those places of public resort in which the low and vulgar, abandoned to the caprice of fashion and the illusions of sensuality, become incapable of reflection, and blindly suffer themselves to be overwhelmed by the torrent of folly and distraction.

Vacant souls are always burthensome to their possessors; and it is the weight of this burden that impels them incessantly in the pursuits of dissipation for relief. The irresistible inclination by which they are carried continually abroad, the anxiety with which they search for society, the trifles on which from day to day they spend their time, announce the emptiness of their minds and the frivolous affection of their hearts. Possessing no resources within themselves, they are forced to rove abroad, and fasten upon every object that presents itself to their view, until they find the wished-for harbour to protect them against the attacks of discontent, and prevent them from reflecting on their ignoble condition.

The enjoyments of sense, therefore, are thus indefatigably followed only as a mean of escaping from themselves. They seize with avidity upon every object that promises to occupy the present hour agreeably, and provide entertainment for the day that is passing over their heads: this must ever be some external object, some new phantom, something that shall prevent them from remaining with themselves. The man whose



mind is sufficiently fertile to invent hour after hour new schemes of pleasure, to open day after day fresh sources of amusement for the lazy and luxurious, is a valuable companion indeed, he is their best, their only friend; not that they are themselves destitute of ability to find such employment as might prevent the total sacrifice of time, and relieve their bosoms from the burthen of themselves; but having always indulged the inclination of being led continually from one new object to another, the call of pleasure becomes the first want and most ardent wish of their lives. From that moment they insensibly lose the power of acting from themselves, and depend for every thing on those about them, without being able to direct or determine the impressions they ought to receive. This is the reason why THE RICH, who are seldom acquainted with any other pleasures than those of sense, are, in general, the most miserable of men.

The nobility and courtiers of France think their enjoyments appear vain and ridiculous only to those who have not the opportunity of partaking in them; but I am of a different opinion.

Returning one Sunday from TRIANON to VERSAILLES, I perceived at a distance a number of people assembled upon the terrace of the castle, and on a nearer approach I beheld LOUIS THE FIFTEENTH surrounded by his court at the windows of the palace. A man very richly dressed, with a large pair of branching antlers fastened on his head, whom they called the STAG, was pursued by about a dozen others who composed the PACK. The pursued and the pursuers leaped into the great canal, scrambled out again, and ran about to all parts, while the air resounded



with the acclamations of clapping of hands, to encourage the continuance of the sport. "What can all this mean?" said I to a Frenchman who stood near me. "Sir," he replied with a very serious countenance, "it is for the entertainment of THE COURT."

The most obscure and indigent persons are certainly happier than these sovereigns of the world, and their slavish retinue, when reduced to the necessity of adopting such means and abject modes of entertainment.

The COURTIER, when he appears at a levee, outwardly affects the face of joy, while his heart is inwardly a prey to the most excruciating sorrows; and speaks with the liveliest interest of transactions in which he had no concern; but perhaps it is necessary to his consequence that he should raise false appearances to the minds of his visitors, who on their side impose equally on him in return. The success, alas! of all his schemes affords him no other pleasure than to see his apartments crowded with company, whose only merit and recommendation in his eyes is a string of hereditary titles, of perhaps no very remote antiquity or honourable origin.

On this privation of the light of human reason do the felicities of a worldly life most frequently depend. From this dark source spring the inordinate pride of the haughty noble, and the no less unbounded ambition of the simple mechanic. Hence arise the disdain of some, the haughtiness of others, and the folly of all.

To men of dissipated minds, who dread beyond every other fear, the painful intrusion of a rational sentiment, these numerous and noisy places of public resort appear like temples dedicated to their



idol pleasure. He who seeks happiness on the couch of indolence; who expends all the activity of his mind, all the energies of his heart, upon trifling objects; who suffers vain and frivolous pursuits to absorb his time, to engage his attention, to lock up all the functions of his soul, cannot patiently endure the idea of being for one moment by himself.

Direful condition! Is there then no occupation whatsoever, no useful employment, no rational recreation sufficiently high and dignified for such a character? Is he of necessity reduced to the afflicting situation of not being able to perform a good and virtuous action during the intervals of suspended pleasure? Can he render no services to friendship! to his country! to himself? Are there no poor and miserable beings, to whose bosoms he might afford a charitable comfort and relief? Is it, in short, impossible for such a character to become, in any way, more wise or virtuous than he was before?

The powers of the human soul are more extensive than they are in general imagined to be; and he who, urged by inclination, or compelled by necessity, most frequently exerts them, will soon find that the highest felicities, of which our nature is capable, reside entirely within ourselves. The wants of life are, for the greater part, merely artificial; and although sensual objects most efficaciously contribute to our pleasure and content, it is not because the enjoyment of them is absolutely necessary, but because they have been rendered desirable by the effect of habit. The gratifications they afford easily persuade us, that the possession of them is essential to happiness; but if we had fortitude to resist their charms, and



courage to look within our own bosoms for that felicity which we so anxiously expect to derive from external objects, we should frequently find a much greater variety of resources there than all the objects of sense are capable of affording.

Men of superficial minds may indeed derive some amusement from assemblies, to which the company in general resort merely *to see and to be seen* ; but how many women of fashion expire in such assemblies, under all the mortification of disappointed vanity ? how many neglected wits sullenly retire into some obscure corner of the room ? The mind, on entering the circles of the great and gay is apt to flatter itself too highly with hopes of applause ; to wait with too much anxiety for the promised pleasure. Wit, coquetry, sensuality, it is true, are, at these meetings, frequently exercised with considerable success. Every candidate displays the little talent he possesses to the best advantage ; and the least informed are not unfrequently considered the most shining characters. The eye, however, may occasionally be gratified by the sight of objects really agreeable ; the ear may listen to observations truly flattering. Lively thoughts and sensible remarks now and then prevail. Characters equally amiable and interesting, occasionally mix among the group. We may form acquaintance with men of distinguished merit, whom we should not otherwise have had an opportunity of knowing ; and meet with women of estimable qualities and irreproachable conduct, whose refined conversation ravishes the mind with the same delight that their exquisite beauty captivates the heart.



But by what a number of painful sensations must this change of pleasures be purchased ! He whom a silent sorrow, a secret discontent, a rational disposition prevents from mixing in the common dissipations of life, cannot see without a sigh the gay conceit, the airy confidence, the blind arrogance, and the bold loquacity, with which these votaries of worldly pleasures proclaim a felicity, that leads them, almost inevitably to their ruin.

It is indeed, irresistably laughable to observe the excessive joy of so many men in place, the absurd airs of so many old dowagers, the presumptuous and ridiculous fopperies of so many hoary-headed children : but who, alas ! is there, that will not grow tired even of the pleasantest comedy, by seeing it too frequently ? He therefore, who has often been an eye-witness of these scenes, who has often yawned with fatigue in these temples of pleasure, and is convinced that they exhibit rather the illusion and appearance than the substance and reality of pleasure, becomes sad and sorrowful in the midst of all their joys, and hastily retires to domestic privacy, to taste of pleasures in which there is no deceit ; pleasures, which leave neither disquietude nor dissatisfaction behind them.

An invitation to the board of Luxury, where DISEASE with leaden sceptre is known to preside, where painful truths are blurted in the ears of those who hoped they were concealed, where reproach and calumny fall without discrimination on the best and worst of characters, is in the estimation of the world, conceived to confer the highest honour, and the greatest pleasure. But he who feels the divine energies of the soul,



turns with abhorrence from those societies which tend to diminish or impair their operations. To him the simplest fare, with freedom and content in the bosoms of an affectionate family, is ten thousand times more agreeable than the rarest dainty and the richest wine, with a society where politeness imposes a silent attention to some vain wit, from whose lips nothing but fatiguing nonsense ever proceeds.

Confidence unlimited, sentiments mutually interchanged and equally sincere, are the only sources from which the true pleasures of society can spring. The spiritless and crowded assemblies of the world, where a round of low and little pleasures fills the hour of entertainment, and pride only aspires to display a pomp of dress and levity of behaviour, may perhaps afford a glimpse of joy to light and thoughtless minds, eagerly impatient to remove the weight which every vacant hour accumulates. But men of reason and reflection, who instead of sensible conversation, instead of any rational amusement, find only a dull unvaried jargon, a tiresome round of compliments, feel aversion from these temples of delight, and resort to them with coldness, dissatisfaction, and disgust.

How tiresome do all the pleasures of the world appear, when compared with the happiness of a faithful, tender, and enlightened friendship! How joyfully do we shake off the shackles of society for that high and intimate connection of the soul, where our inclinations are free, our feelings genuine, our sentiments unbiassed; where a mutual confidence of thoughts and actions, of pleasures and of pains, uninterruptedly prevails; where the heart is led with joy along the path of virtue,



and the mind conducted by happiness into the bowers of truth ; where every thought is anticipated before it escapes from the lips ; where advice, consolation, succour, are reciprocally given and received in all the accidents and misfortunes of life ! The soul, thus animated by the charm of friendship, springs from its sloth and apathy, and views the irradiating beams of hope breaking on its repose. Casting a retrospective eye on the time that has passed, the happy pair mutually exclaim with the tenderest emotions, “ Oh ! what pleasures have we not already experienced, what joys have we not already felt ? ” Does the tear of sorrow steal down the cheek of the one ? the other, with affection wipes it tenderly away. The deepest sorrows of the one are felt with equal poignancy by the other : but what sorrow can resist the consolation which flows from an intercourse of hearts so tenderly, so intimately, so closely united ! Day after day, they communicate to each other all that they have seen, all that they have heard, all that they feel, and every thing they know. Time flies before them on his swiftest pinions. The ear is never tired of the gratification of listening to each other’s conversation. The only misfortune of which they have any fear, is the greatest they can possibly experience, the misfortune of absence, separation, and death.

Possessed of such refined felicity, it must not be attributed to austerity of character, or incivility of manners, but to a venial error of imagination, if the intercourses of ordinary minds no longer charm us ; if we become insensible to their indifference, and careless of their aversion ; if in consequence of the superiority of our joys



we no longer mix in the noisy pleasures of the world, and shun all society which has numbers only for its recommendation.

But it is the lot of human bliss to be unstable. Oftentimes, alas ! when we conceive our enjoyments most certain and secure, an unforeseen and sudden blow strikes, even in our very arms, the unhappy victim of its fate. On such an event all the pleasure of our lives appears to be forever extinguished ; the surrounding objects seem desert and forlorn ; every thing we behold excites terror and dismay. The arms of friendship are in vain extended to embrace the friend that is no more ; in vain the voice of fondness articulates the beloved name. The step, the well-known step, seems suddenly to strike upon our listening ear ; but reflection interposes, and the fancied sounds are heard no more : all is hushed, still, and lifeless : we are rendered almost insensible of existence. Solitude appears on every side, and the bleeding heart withdraws the attention of the mind from every living object. The wearied spirits in the hour of dejection, persuade us that affection is gone, and that we are no longer capable of loving, or of being beloved ; and to a heart that has once tasted the sympathies of love, life, without affection, is death the most horrible. The unfortunate being therefore who has experienced this misery, is inclined to live in Solitude and die alone. In these reflective moments, in this sudden transition from the height of happiness to the deepest misery, no person seems anxious to offer him the smallest consolation, to participate in his sufferings, or to be capable of forming an adequate idea of his distress : the grief, indeed, which such a loss



inflicts, cannot be conceived until it has been felt.

It is, however, under circumstances like these that SOLITUDE enjoys its highest triumph: It is here that all the advantages which result from it may be fully experienced; for affliction has no wounds to which, when wisely applied, it will not give immediate ease, and in the event completely cure.

The wounds of affliction, it is true, admit only of a slow and gradual remedy. The art of living alone requires so much initiation before it can be acquired, is subject to such a variety of accidents, and depends so much upon situations suitable to the bent of particular characters, that the mind must have attained a high degree of maturity for Solitude, before effects so considerable and advantageous can be expected from it; but he who has acquired sufficient vigour to break the galling chains of prejudice, and from his earliest youth has felt esteem and fondness for the pleasures of retirement, will not, under such circumstances, be embarrassed in his choice. From the moment he perceives himself indifferent to the objects which surround him, and that the gaities of public society have lost their charms, he will then rely on the powers of his soul, and never be less alone than in the company of himself.

Men of genius are frequently condemned to employments as disagreeable to the temper of their minds as a nauseous medicine is to an empty stomach. Forced to toil upon some dry and disgusting subject, confined to a particular spot, and utterly unable to release themselves from the troublesome and impeding yoke, such characters



seldom expect tranquility on this side of the grave; for deprived of the opportunities of engaging in the dissipations of life, every object which the world presents to their view encreases their disgust. It is not for them, they exclaim, that the young zephyrs open the budding foilage with their caressing breath: that the feathered choir put forth, in enlivening strains, their rural songs; that odoriferous flowers deck the enamelled meads. But leave these complainants to themselves, give them their liberty and leisure, and you would soon observe the native enthusiasm of their minds regenerate, and see them in the highest region soaring with the bold wing and penetrating eye of the bird of Jove.

If Solitude be capable of dissipating griefs of this complexion, what effect will it not produce on the minds of men who have the opportunity of retiring at pleasure to its friendly shades, who only seek for the enjoyments of a pure air, and whose only desire is domestic felicity? When ANTISTHENES was asked, what service he had received from philosophy? he answered, "It has taught me to subdue myself." POPE says, that he never laid his head upon his pillow without reflecting, that the most important lesson of life was to learn the art of being happy within himself. It seems to me that all those who are capable of living contentedly at home, and of loving every object by which they are surrounded, even to the dog and the cat, have found what POPE looked for.

Those pleasures and dissipations which are sought after with so much eagerness and anxiety, have in truth, the effect of producing the most tedious reflection in our minds, when we com-



mine with ourselves. It is then that we learn in what the true felicity of life properly consists, whether in the possession of those external objects which we have no power either to alter or reform, or in a due or proper regulation of ourselves. It is then that we begin to perceive how false and faithless those flattering illusions prove which seem to promise us so much happiness. A lady, possessed of youth and beauty, wrote to me one evening on returning from a celebrated ridotto, "You observed with what gaiety and content I quitted the scene. Believe me, I felt a void so painful in my breast at the sight of those fictitious joys, that I could willingly have torn the flowery decorations from my dress."

All the pleasures of the world are nothing, if they do not render the heart more happy in itself, and tend to increase our domestic felicity. On the contrary, every species of misfortune, however accumulated, may be borne by those who are capable of enjoying the privacy of study, and the elegant recreation which books afford. To have obtained this resource, is already to have made considerable advances towards happiness; for it would be presumptuous to exact more from us than an inclination to regulate the affections of the heart, and to controul the passions of the mind. A celebrated philosopher, therefore, has with great judgment observed, that there is both pride and falsehood in pretending that man alone is capable of effecting his own happiness. We are, however, most certainly capable of modifying the natural dispositions of our souls; we are capable of forming our tastes, varying our sentiments, directing our in-



clinations, of subduing even the passions themselves ; and we are then not only less sensible of all the wants of life, but feel even satisfaction under circumstances which to others would appear grievous and intolerable. Health is, without doubt, one of the most precious enjoyments man can possess ; and yet there are circumstances and situations under which even the privation of it may be accompanied with real tranquility. How many times have I returned my thanks to the Great Disposer of human events for an indisposition which has confined me at home, and enabled me to invigorate the weakened functions of my soul in quietude and silence ; a happiness that receded as my indisposition quitted me. After having been obliged to drag through the streets of the metropolis every day of my life during a number of years with a feeble constitution, and weakened limbs, susceptible on feeling the smallest cold, to the same sensations as if knives were separating the flesh from the bone ; after experiencing day after day, in the course of my profession, sorrows so afflicting, that I offered up the gratitude of my heart with tears of joy, when it pleased the Almighty to afford me a moment of ease and quietude ; it will not be wondered that any indisposition which occasioned my confinement should afford me inexpressible happiness.

The physician who possesses the least sensibility, being continually employed in administering relief to the sufferings of others, must, without doubt, frequently forget his own ; but alas ! how often also must he feel the horror of his situation, where he is summoned to exercise a power not within the reach of his art, and is obliged to at-



tend, notwithstanding all the bodily and mental anguish he may personally feel. Under such circumstances, the disease which relieves the mind from the distraction of anxiety, is to me a soft repose, a pleasing Solitude, provided peevish friends do not intrude, and politely disturb me with their fatiguing visits. In these moments I pray the benediction of Heaven on those who neglect to overwhelm me with their idle conversation, and, with the kindest compassion, forget to disturb me by enquiries after my health. A single day in which I can remain quietly at home, without being obliged to receive a visitor, and employ my mind on literary subjects, affords me, notwithstanding my bodily pain, more real pleasure than our women of quality and men of fashion ever felt from all their feasting and entertainments.

The diminution which our sufferings experience in Solitude, is in itself a considerable advantage; for quietude of mind to men whose duties depend on the public voice, from whom an indefatigable activity is exacted, and who unavoidably pass their days in the midst of continued anxieties, is in effect transcendant felicity.

The mind, whether of the young or of the old, no longer feels the fear of being alone when it is capable of occupying itself in privacy on some useful or agreeable subject.

If the temper should be soured by ill-humour, we should endeavour to create a diversion of the mind by reading with some fixed and particular design; and it is impossible to read without deriving some advantage, provided we have a pen or pencil ready to mark the new ideas as they occur, or the observations which illustrate and



confirm those we already possess; for unless we apply what we learn to our own dispositions, or the characters of other men, study of every kind soon becomes fatiguing: exercise, however, will easily lead to this habit, and then reading is perhaps one of the most sure and certain remedies against lassitude and discontent.

The mind having once acquired the habit of fixing its attention, is always capable of driving away unpleasant and painful ideas. The sight of a noble and interesting object, the study of a useful science, a picture in which the various revolutions of society are historically displayed, and the progress made in any particular art, agreeably rivet attention, and banish the sorrows of the mind.

Pleasures of this description, it is certain, greatly transcend all those which administer merely to the senses. I am aware, that in speaking of the pleasures of the mind, sublime meditation, the profound deductions of reason, and the brilliant effusions of fancy, are in general understood; but there are also others, for the perfect enjoyment of which neither extensive knowledge nor extraordinary talents are necessary. These are the pleasures which result from activity and employment; pleasures that are equally within the reach of the ignorant clown or learned philosopher, and which produce enjoyments no less exquisite than those we first mentioned: the exertion of manual labour, therefore, ought never to be despised. I am acquainted with gentlemen who are instructed in the mechanism of their own watches; who are able to work as painters, locksmiths, carpenters; and who are not only furnished with almost all the tools proper to every



branch of trade, but know also how to use them : such characters never feel the least disquietude from the want of society, are in consequence the happiest of men.

The labours we experience in any art or science from the recreation of it ; and when carried to a certain degree of perfection, render man social with himself, and counterbalance the greatest of moral evils. To conquer difficulties is to promote our pleasures ; and every time our efforts attain to a certain point ; from whence we can view with complacency the end of our labours, the soul feels an inexpressible tranquility and satisfaction, and being contented within itself, seeks for no higher pleasure.

The enjoyments of the heart are within the reach of all men who, free, easy, and affectionate, are contented with themselves, and pleased with those about them. Alas ! how much superior, therefore, for this reason, is the happiness which a country life affords, to that deceitful felicity which is affected in the courts of Princes, and in the brilliant circle of the great and gay ; a truth severely felt by men of worldly pleasure, and confessed by their frequent complaints of restlessness and languor ; complaints unknown among the vallies of the Alps, or upon those mountains where innocence yet dwells, and which no visitor ever quitted without the tribute of a tear.

The fatal poison, however, which lurks beneath the manners of luxurious cities might easily be avoided ; by renouncing the insipid life in which the inhabitants are engaged. Virtuous actions convey tranquility to the soul ; and a joy equally calm and permanent accompanies that man



into the closest recesses of retirement, whose mind is fixed upon discharging the duties of humanity. With what delight also do we dwell upon the recital of our school adventures, the wanton tricks of our youth! The history of the early periods of our lives, the remembrance of our plays and pastimes of the little pains and puerile wishes of our infancy, always recall to our minds the most agreeable ideas. Ah! with what complacent smiles, with what soft regret a venerable old man turns his eyes upon the happy era when the incarnation of youth animated all his joys, when he entered into every enterprize with vigour, vivacity, and courage, when he sought difficulties only to display his powers in surmounting them!

Let us contrast the character we formerly bore with that which we at present possess; or, by giving a freer range to our idea, let us rather cast our thoughts upon the various events of which we have been witnesses, upon the means which the Almighty has thought proper to employ in the exaltation or debasement of empires, upon the rapid progress which the arts and sciences have made within our own remembrance, upon the advancement of philosophy and the retreat of prejudice, upon the ascendancy which ignorance and superstition still maintain notwithstanding the sublime efforts of genius to suppress them, upon the bright irradiations of intellect, and the moral depravation of the heart, and we shall soon perceive the clouds of languor disappear, and tranquillity, peace, and good humour prevail.

The inexpressible felicity, that variety of delightful enjoyments, so superior to the gratifications of sense, which solitude affords to every



reflecting mind, are capable of being relished at every period of our lives ; in the last decay of age as well as in the earliest prime of youth. He who to a vigorous constitution, a free spirit, an easy temper, has added the advantages of a cultivated understanding, will here experience, while his heart continues pure and his mind innocent, the highest and most unalterable pleasure. The love of exercise animates all the faculties of the soul, and increases the energies of nature. Employment is the first desire of every active mind. It is the silent consciousness of the superiority of our nature, of the force of our intellectual powers, of the high dignity of our character, which inspire great souls with that noble ardour which carries them to the true sublime. Constrained by the duties of their situation to mix in the intercourses of society ; obliged to submit, in spite of their inclination, to the frivolous and fatiguing dissipations of the world, it is in withdrawing from these tumultuous scenes, into the silence of meditation, that men become sensible of the divine effervescence of their souls, feel a wish to break their chains, to escape from the servility of pleasure, and from all the noisy and tumultuous joys in which they are engaged. We never feel with higher energy and satisfaction, with greater comfort and cordiality, that we live, think, are reasonable beings, self-active, free, capable of the most sublime exertions, and partaking of immortality, than in those moments when we shut the door against the intrusions of impertinence and fashion,

There are few vexations so insupportable as those tasteless visits, those annoying partialities by which a life of lazy opulence and wanton pleasure is occupied. " My thoughts," says



ROUSSEAU, "will only come when they please, " and not when I chuse." Obligated, therefore, to wait for their arrival, the intrusion of a stranger, or even the visit of an acquaintance by whom he was not intimately known, was always dreadful to him. It was for this reason alone that this extraordinary character, who seldom experienced an hour of tranquility unaccompanied by pain, felt such petulant indignation against the importunate civilities and empty compliments of common conversation, while he enjoyed the rational intercourse of sensible and well informed minds with the highest delight\*.

How soon, alas, the dignity of the human character becomes debased by associating with low and little minds! How many rays of thought, precious rays! emanating immediately from the Deity upon the mind of man, are extinguished by the noxious vapours of stagnated life! But it is meditation and reflection that must give them birth, elevate them to the heights of genius, make them subsistent with the nature of the human MIND, and conformable to the spirit of the human character.

VIRTUES to which the soul cannot raise itself, even in the most amiable of all societies, are frequently produced by solitude. Separated by distance from our friends, we feel ourselves deprived of the company of those who are dearest to our hearts; and to relieve the dreary void, we aspire to the most sublime efforts, and adopt the boldest resolutions. On the contrary, while we are under the protecting care of friendship and of

\* "I never could endure," says ROUSSEAU, "the empty " and unmeaning compliments of common conversation; " but from conversations useful or ingenious, I have always " felt the highest pleasure, and have never refused to partake of them."



love, while their kind offices supply all our wants, and their affectionate embraces lock us eternally in their arms, we forget, in the blandishments of such a state, almost the faculty of self motion, lose sight of the powers of acting from ourselves, and seldom reflect that we may be reduced to the necessity of supporting ourselves, under the adversities of life. To guard against this event, therefore, it is proper, by retiring into Solitude, to experience and rely upon the strength of our own powers. The soul weakened by the storms of life, then acquires new vigour, fixes the steady eye of fortitude on the frowns of adversity, and learns to elude the threatening rocks on which the happiness of vulgar minds so frequently is wrecked. He who devotes his days to Solitude, finds resources within himself of which he had no idea, while philosophy inspires him with courage to sustain the most rigorous shocks of fate.

The disposition of man becomes more firm, his opinions more determined and correct, when, urged by the tumults of life, he reflects, in the quietude of his heart, on his own nature and the manners of the world. The constitution of a versatile and undecided character proceeds entirely from that intellectual weakness which prevents the mind from thinking for itself. Such characters consult upon every occasion the ORACLE of public opinion, so infallible in their ideas, before they know what they ought to think, or in what manner their judgment should be formed, or their conduct regulated.

Weak minds always conceive it most safe to adopt the sentiments of the multitude. They never venture an opinion upon any subject until the majority have decided. These decisions, whether upon men or things, they implicitly follow.



without giving themselves the trouble to enquire who is right, or on which side the truth lies. The spirit of truth and love of equity, indeed, are only to be expected from those who are fearless of living alone. Men of dissipated minds are never the protectors of the weak, or the avengers of the oppressed. Are the various and powerful hosts of fools and knaves your enemies? Are you injured in your property by injustice, or in your fame by calumny? You must not hope for redress from light characters, or for support from men of dissipation; for they only repeat the voice of error, and propagate the fallacies of prejudice.

To live in Solitude, to feel ourselves alone, only inspires fear, inasmuch as it contributes to extinguish one corporeal power by giving birth to another. The powers of the mind, on the contrary, augment in proportion as they become more concentrated, when no person is united to us, or ready to afford protection. To live undisturbed, to mitigate the suffering of present impressions, to render the mind superior to the accidents of life, and to gain sufficient intrepidity to oppose the danger of adversity, it is absolutely necessary to live alone. How smoothly flows the stream of life when we have no anxiety to enquire "Who did this?" "Who said that?" How many miserable prejudices, and still more contemptible passions, has one serious reflection subdued! How quickly, in such a situation, that slavish, shameful, and idolatrous veneration for every unworthy object disappears! With what noble spirit the votary of Solitude fearlessly disdains those characters who conceive that high birth and illustrious descent confer a privilege to tyrannize over inferior men, to whom



they frequently afford so many reasons to hold them in contempt.

An ingenious and celebrated observer of men and things informs us, it is in leisure and retirement alone, that the soul exalts itself into a sublime superiority over the accidents of life, becomes indifferent to the good or evil it may experience, the praise or censure it may receive, the life it may enjoy, or even the death it may suffer. It is in Solitude alone that those noble and refined ideas, those profound principles and unerring axioms which form and support every great character, are developed. Even philosophy itself, continues this excellent Philosopher, in his observations upon CICERO, and those deep theories upon which the sublime conduct of the statesman is founded, and which enable him to perform with excellence the important duties with which he is charged, are formed in the silence of Solitude, in some distant retirement from the great theatre of the world.

As Solitude, therefore, not only gives firmness to the characters, and propriety to the sentiments of men, but leads the mind to a true degree of elevation, so likewise there is no other situation in which we so soon acquire the important knowledge of ourselves.

RETIREMENT connects us more closely with our own bosoms, and we live in habits of the strictest intimacy only with ourselves. It is certainly possible for men to be deliberate and wise, even amidst all the tumults of the world, especially if their principles be well fixed before they enter on the stage of life; but it is much more difficult to preserve an integrity of conduct amidst the corruptions of society than in the simplicity of Solitude. . . How many men please only



by their faults, -and recommend themselves only by their vices! How many profligate villains and unprincipled adventurers, of insinuating manners, are well received by society, only because they have learnt the art of administering to the follies, the weaknesses, the vices of those who give the lead to fashion! How is it possible that the mind, intoxicated with the fumes of that incense which flattery burns to its honour, should be capable of knowing or appreciating the characters of men! But, on the contrary, in the silence and tranquility of retirement, whether we are led by inclination to the study of ourselves; awakened to reflection by a sense of misery, or compelled to think seriously on our situation, and to examine the inward complexion of the heart, we can learn what we are, and what we ought to be.

How many new and useful discoveries may be made by occasionally forcing ourselves from the vortex of the world to the calm enjoyments of study and reflection! To accomplish this end, it is only necessary to commune seriously with our hearts, and to examine our conduct with candour and impartiality. The man of worldly pleasure, indeed, has reason to shun this self-examination, conscious that the result of the enquiry would be extremely unfavourable: for he who only judges of himself by the flattering opinion which others have been pleased to express of his character, will in such a scrutiny behold with surprize, that he is the miserable slave of fashion, habit and public opinion, submitting with laborious diligence, and the utmost possible grace, to the exactions of politeness, and the authoritative demands of established ceremony; never venturing to contradict the imperious voice



of fashion; however senseless and absurd its dictates may appear: obsequiously following the example of others, giving credit to every thing they say, doing every thing they do, and not daring to condemn those pursuits which every one seems so highly to approve. If such a character possess that degree of candour he ought, he will not only perceive, but acknowledge, that an infinite number of his daily thoughts and actions are inspired by a base fear of himself, or arise from a servile complaisance to others; that in the company of princes and statesmen he only seeks to flatter their vanities, and indulge their caprices; that by his devotion to politeness, he submits to become the minister of their vices, rather than offer them the smallest contradiction, or hazard an opinion that is likely to give them the least displeasure. Whoever with calm consideration views this terrifying picture will feel in the silent emotion of his heart the necessity of occasionally retiring into Solitude, and seeking society with men of nobler sentiments and purer principles.

The violent alternatives of pleasure and pain, of hope and fear, of content and mortification, incessantly torment the mind that has not courage to rise superior to the influence of the objects of sense. The virtues fly from the habitation of a heart that yields itself to first impressions, of a heart that is for ever obedient, to the feelings of the moment, and incapable of exerting a dominion over them. The virtues also cease to dwell in the bosoms of the worldly, who, following the example of the times, are guided in all their actions by sinister motives, and directed to every end by the mean consideration of self-interest either immediate or remote.



To exercise even virtue itself with advantage and effect, it is necessary to retire into Solitude: to avoid the impediments which the accidents of the passing day may create; to estimate, by a silent examination, the true value of things, and the real merit of human actions. The mind debased by the corruptions of the world, has no idea of relinquishing the prospect of present benefit, and making a noble sacrifice of glory and of fortune. They never appreciate any action by its intrinsic merit but conduct all their calculations upon a vile notion of lucre, and only assume the garb of virtue as a mean of catching some poor advantage, obtaining some paltry honour, or gaining some servicable credit: to those who from their power and superiority, might, if they were equally base and contemptible, prejudice their interests, they pay a servile court, flatter, lie, calumniate, and cringe, and depart only to commit new baseness elsewhere.

Man discovers with deeper penetration the extent and nature of the passions by which he is swayed when he reflects on their power in the calmness and silence of Solitude, where the soul, being less frequently suspended between hope and fear, acts with greater freedom. How virtuous, alas! do we all become under the pressure of calamity! How submissive, how indulgent, how kind is man, when the finger of God chastises his frailties, by rendering his hopes delusive, and his schemes abortive; when the Almighty Power humbles human pride, converts our wisdom into folly, our profoundest counsels into manifest and striking instances of madness! At such a moment the caresses of a child, the



most distant civility from inferiors, afford us the highest comfort. The scene, however, presently changes ; we view misfortune under a different aspect, our softness dies away, our sufferings decrease, the soul begins to rise from its dejection, we acquire a knowledge of its faculties, become indifferent to every external object, and, feeling the extent of its powers. discover our superiority over all those circumstances which before gave inquietude to fear, and alarm to weakness.

Sheltered in the retreats of Solitude from the extremes of fortune, and less exposed to the intoxication of success, or the depression of disappointment, life glides easily along like the shadow of a passing cloud. ADVERSITY need not here intrude, to teach us how insignificant we are in the eyes of God, how helpless without his assistance, how much our unchecked pride, poisons the happiness of life, torments the heart, and becomes the endless and increasing source of human misery ; for in the calm regions of retirement, undisturbed by treacherous fondness or groundless hate, if even hope should disappear, and every comfort vanish from our view, we are still capable of submitting to the stroke of fate with patience and resignation.

Let every one, therefore, who wishes to think with dignity, or live with ease, seek the retreats of Solitude, and enter into a friendly intercourse with his own heart. How small a portion of true philosophy, with an enlightened understanding, will render us humble and compliant ! But, in the mists of prejudice, dazzled by the intellectual glimmer of false lights, every one mistakes the true path, and seeks for happiness in



the shades of darkness and the labyrinths of obscurity. The habits of retirement and tranquillity can alone enable us to make a just estimate of men and things, and it is by renouncing all the prepossessions which the corruptions of society have implanted in the mind, that we make the first advances towards the restoration of reason and the attainment of felicity.

Solitude will afford us this advantage, if when we are there alone before God, and far retired from the observation of men, the silent language of conscience shews to us the great imperfection of our characters, and the many difficulties we have yet to surmount before we can attain the excellence of which our nature is capable. In society men mutually deceive each other: they make a parade of learning, affect sentiments which they do not possess, dazzle the observer by borrowed rays, and in the end mislead themselves by the illusions which they raise. But in Solitude, far removed from the guile of flattery and falsehood, accompanied by truth and followed by virtue, the mind enters into a close acquaintance with itself, forms its judgment with greater accuracy, and feels the inestimable value of sincerity and singleness of heart. Here the possession of these qualities can never prove injurious; for in the retreats of Solitude, moral excellence is not an object of either ridicule or contempt. We here compare the false appearances of the world with the reality of things, and perceive the advantages they seem to promise, and the specious virtues they appeared to possess, vanish like an airy vapour. The pride of human wit, the false conclusions of reason, the mistakes of vanity, and the weaknesses of



the heart, are here developed to the eye of impartiality. All that is imperfect in our fairest virtues, in our sublimest conceptions, in our most generous actions, all the ostentations of self-love, are here exhibited in their natural forms. Is it possible to acquire so perfect a knowledge of ourselves in the world, amidst the bustle of business, and among the encreasing dangers of social life?

To subdue the dangerous passions and pernicious inclinations which agitate and mislead the heart it is necessary to fix the attention on other objects, and turn our attachments to more laudable pursuits; but Solitude is the only situation in which new sentiments and new ideas, arising from inexhaustible resources, instill themselves into the mind: here the soul acts with perfect freedom in every direction, and exerts all the force and energy of which it is susceptible. And as Solitude to the idle may mitigate the intemperance of desire, so, on the contrary, to the active it affords a complete victory over all the most irregular inclinations of the heart.

Snatched from the illusions of society, from the inares of the world, and placed in the security of retirement, we view every object in its true form, as well under the distractions of misfortune, as in the pangs of sickness and in the anguish of death. The vanity and emptiness of all those advantages which we expect from external objects, appear in full view, and we discover the necessity of curbing the extravagance of our thoughts, and the licentiousness of our desires. The veil of false appearance is removed; and he who in the world was raised as much above others, as by his faults and vices he



ought to have sunk beneath them, here perceives the imperfections which flattery had concealed, and which a crowd of miserable slaves had perhaps the baseness and cowardice entirely to justify.

To acquire durable pleasures and true felicity, it is necessary to adopt that judicious and rational philosophy which considers life in a serious point of view, courts enjoyments which neither time nor accident can destroy, and looks with an eye of pity on the stupid vulgar, agitating their minds and tormenting their hearts in splendid miseries and childish conversations. Those however, on the contrary, who have no knowledge of their own hearts, who have no habits of reflection, no means of employment, who have not persevered in virtue nor are able to listen to the voice of reason, have nothing to hope from SOLITUDE; their joys are all annihilated when the blood has lost its warmth, when the senses are blunted, and their powers diminished; on experiencing the least inconvenience, the most trifling reverse of fortune, they fall into the deepest distress, the most horrid ideas fill their minds, and they are tormented with all the agitations of an alarmed imagination.

We have hitherto only pointed out one portion of the general advantages of Solitude: there are, however, many others which touch men more nearly. Ah! who has not experienced its kind influence in the adversities of life! Who has not in the moment of convalescence, in the hour of melancholy, in the age when separation or death has deprived the heart of the intercourses of friendship, sought relief under its salutary shades? Happy is the being who is sensible of the advan-



tages of a religious retirement from the world, of a sacred tranquillity, where all the benefits to be derived from society impress themselves more deeply in the heart, where every hour is consecrated to the practice of the mild and peaceful virtues, and where every man, when he is on the bed of death, wishes he had lived ! But these advantages become much more conspicuous when we compare the modes of thought which employ the mind of a solitary philosopher with those of a worldly sensualist ; the tiresome and tumultuous life of the one with the soft tranquillity of the other ; when we oppose the fear and horror which disturb the death-bed of the worldly-minded man with the peaceable and easy exit of those pious souls who submit with resignation to the will of Heaven. It is at this awful moment that we feel how important it is to turn the eye inwardly upon ourselves, and to hold a religious communion with our Creator, if we would bear the sufferings of life with dignity, and the pains of death with ease.

Solitude affords us the most incontestible advantages under the greatest adversities of life. The convalescent, the unfortunate, the misanthropist here find equal relief ; their tortured souls here find a balm for the deep and painful wounds they have received, and soon regain their pristine health and vigour.

Sickness and affliction would fly with horror from the retreats of Solitude, if their friendly shades did not afford them that consolation which they are unable to obtain in the temples of pleasure. The subtle vapour which sensuality and intoxication shed upon the objects that surround a state of health and happiness entirely disap-



pear ; and all those charms, which subsist rather in imagination than in reality, lose their power. To the happy every object wears the delightful colours of the rose ; but to the miserable all is black and dreadful. The two conditions are equally in the extreme ; but neither of them discover the errors into which they are betrayed, until the moment when the curtain drops, when the scene changes, the illusion is dissipated. Both of them enjoy the dream, while the understanding continues silent and absorbed. The one feels that God employs his attention to the preservation of his creatures, even when he sees them the most abandoned and profligate. The others devote themselves to those vanities and pleasures with which the fashions of the world intoxicate the mind even although at the very moment they reflect seriously upon themselves, upon their present situation, their future destiny, and the means by which alone they can be conducted to perfect felicity.

How unhappy should we be if the Divine Providence were to grant us every thing we desire ! Even under the very afflictions by which man conceives all the happiness of his life annihilated, God perhaps purposes something extraordinary in his favour. New circumstances excite new exertions. In Solitude and tranquillity, if we earnestly endeavour to conquer misfortune, the activity of life, which, until the moment of adversity, had been perhaps suspended, suddenly changes ; and the mind regains its energy and vigour, even while it laments the state of inaction to which it conceives itself to be irretrievably reduced.



But there are still greater advantages : if sorrow force us into Solitude, patience and perseverance soon restore the soul to its natural tranquillity and joy. We ought never to inspect the volume of futurity ; its pages will only deceive us on the contrary, we ought for ever to repeat this experimental truth, this consolatory maxim. That the objects which men behold at a distance with fear and trembling, lose, on a nearer approach, not only their disagreeable and menacing aspect, but frequently, in the event, produce the most agreeable and unexpected pleasures. He who tries every expedient, who boldly opposes himself to every difficulty, who stands steady and inflexible to every obstacle, who neglects no exertion within his power, and relies with confidence upon the assistance of God, extracts from affliction both its poison and its sting, and deprives misfortune of its victory.

Sorrow, misfortune, sickness, soon render us easy and familiar with Solitude. How readily we renounce the world, how indifferent we become to all its pleasures, when the insidious eloquence of the passions is silenced, when we are distracted by pain, oppressed by grief, and deserted by all our powers ! Under such circumstances we immediately perceive the weakness and instability of those succours which the world affords ; where pain is mixed with every joy, and vanity reigns throughout. How many useful truths, alas ! does sickness teach even to kings and ministers, while they suffer themselves to be deluded and imposed upon by all mankind !

The opportunity which a valetudinarian enjoys of employing his faculties with facility and success in a manner conformable to the extent of



his designs, is undoubtedly short, and passes rapidly away. Such happiness is the lot only of those who enjoy robust health: they alone can exclaim, "*Time is my own*:" but he who labours under continual sickness and suffering, and whose avocation depends on the public necessity or caprice, can never say that he has *one moment to himself*. He must watch the fleeting hours as they pass, and seize an interval of leisure when and where he can. Necessity as well as reason convinces him, that he must, in spite of his daily sufferings, his wearied body, or his harassed mind, firmly resist his accumulating troubles, and, if he would save himself from becoming the victim of dejection manfully combat the difficulties by which he is attacked. The more we enervate ourselves the more we become the prey of ill health; but a determined courage and obstinate resistance frequently renovate our powers; and he who, in the calm of Solitude, vigorously wrestles with misfortune, is certain, in the event, of gaining considerable advantage.

But under the pains of sickness, we are apt too easily to listen to the voice of indulgence, we neglect to exercise the powers we possess; and instead of directing the attention to those objects which may divert distraction and strengthen fortitude we foster fondly in our bosoms all the disagreeable circumstances of our situation. The soul sinks from inquietude to inquietude, loses all its powers, abandons its remaining reason, and feels, from its increasing agonies and sufferings; no confidence in its own exertions. The valetudinarian should force his mind to forget its troubles; should endeavour to emerge



from the heavy atmosphere by which he is enveloped and depressed. By these exertions he will certainly find unexpected relief, and be able to accomplish that which before he conceived to be impossible. For this purpose, however, he must first dismiss the physicians who daily visit him to ascertain the state of his health; feeling his pulse with a ludicrous gravity, while they seriously shake their heads, and perform, according to their custom, many other affected and ridiculous tricks; but who, from a great inclination to discover what does not exist, unhappily never discern the symptoms that are most plainly to be seen. These pretenders to science serve only to alarm the mind of the patient, to rivet his attention more closely to those very objects which it is his interest to forget, and to redouble his sufferings, by the beneficial danger into which they raise the most trifling circumstance of his disorder. He must also avoid the company of false friends, and all those who only administer flattery to his frailties. He must learn to assure them, that he disbelieves all that they have told him; for if the sensations they excite are thought to have any foundation in truth, his own imagination immediately superinduces a variety of gloomy phantoms and terrifying chimeras.

Thus, under situations the most difficult to support, there still remain resources and consolations in the bosom of Solitude. Are the nerves deranged? Is the head pained by vertigos? Has the mind no longer any power to think, the eye to read, the hand to write? Has it become physically impossible to exercise any of the functions of the soul? in such a situation we must learn



“to VEGETATE,” said one of the most enlightened philosophers of Germany, when he beheld me at Hanover, in a condition which rendered me incapable of adopting any other resource. O GARVE ! with what rapture I threw myself into your arms ! With what transports I heard you speak, when you shewed me the necessity of learning to support myself under my accumulated calamities, by convincing me that you had experienced equal sufferings, and had been able to practise the lessons which you taught.

The sublime MENDELSSOHN, during a certain period of his life, was frequently obliged to retire, when discoursing on philosophical subjects, to avoid the danger of fainting. In these moments it was his custom to neglect all study, to banish labour of thought entirely from his mind. His physician one day asked him, “How then do you employ your time, if you do not think ?”—“I retire to the window of my chamber, and count the tiles upon the roof of my neighbour’s house.”

Without thy tranquil wisdom, O my beloved MENDELSSOHN ! Without thy resignation to the will of HEAVEN, we can never reach that elevated grandeur of character, can never attain to that dignified endurance of our sufferings, can never possess that stoic fortitude which places human happiness beyond the reach of misery, and out of the power of fate. Thy great example pours consolation into the heart ; and humanity should behold with grateful joy the superiority which resignation affords to us, even under the severest of physical misfortunes.



A slight effort to obtain the faintest ray of comfort, and a calm resignation under inevitable misfortunes, will mutually contribute to procure relief. The man whose mind adheres to virtue, will never permit himself to be so far overcome by the sense of misfortune, as not to endeavour to vanquish his feelings, even when, fallen into the unhappy state of despair, he no longer sees any prospect of comfort or consolation. The most dejected bosom may endure sensations deeply afflicting, provided the mind be not lazy and inactive, will exercise its attention on some other object than itself, and make the smallest effort to withdraw the soul from brooding over its torments and its sorrows, by inspiring the mind with ideas of virtuous sentiments, noble actions, and generous inclinations. For this reason, it is necessary to cultivate in our minds the love of activity, and, after a dutiful and entire submission to the dispensations of Heaven, force ourselves into employment, until, from the warmth of our exertions, we acquire a habit of alertness. I consider a disposition to be active amidst that disgust and apathy which destroy the nerves of life, as the most sure and efficacious antidote against the poison of a dejected spirit, a soured temper, a melancholy mind.

The influence of the mind upon the body is one of the most consolatory truths to those who are the subject of habitual sufferings. Supported by this idea, they never permit their reason to be entirely overcome: religion, under this idea, never loses its powerful empire in the breast: and they are never instructed in the lamentable truth, that men of the finest sensibilities and most cultivated understandings frequently



discover less fortitude under afflictions than the most vulgar of mankind. It is perhaps incredible, that CAMPANELLA should have been capable of deranging his mind by gloomy reflections to such a degree, that he might have endured the tortures of the rack with less pain, but I can, from my own experience, assert, that even in the extremity of distress, every object which diverts the attention, softens the evils we endure, and frequently drives them, unperceived, away.

Many celebrated philosophers have by this means at length been able not only to preserve a tranquil mind in the midst of the most poignant sufferings, but have even encreased the strength of their intellectual faculties in spite of their corporeal pains. ROUSSEAU composed the greatest part of his immortal works under the continual pressure of sickness and of grief; GELLERT, who, by his mild, agreeable, and instructive writings, has become the preceptor of Germany, certainly found in this interesting occupation the surest remedy against melancholy. At an age already far advanced in life, MENDELSON, who, although not by nature subject to dejection, was for a long time oppressed by an almost inconceivable derangement of the nervous system, by submitting with patience and docility to his sufferings, still maintains all the noble and sublime advantages of his youth. GARVE, who had lived whole years without being able to read, to write, or to think, afterwards composed his treatise on CICERO; and in that work, this profound writer, so circumspect in all his expressions, that he would have been sensibly affected if any word too emphatic



had dropped from his pen, with a species of enthusiasm returns thanks to the Almighty God for the imbecility of his constitution, because it had convinced him of the extensive influence which the powers of the mind possess over those of the body.

A firm resolution, a steady adherence towards some noble and interesting end, will enable us to endure the most poignant affliction. An heroic courage is natural in all the dangerous enterprises of ambition, and in the little crosses of life is much more common than patience ; but, a persevering courage, under evils of long duration, is a quality rarely seen, especially when the soul, enervated by melancholy, abandons itself to despair, its most ordinary refuge, and looks up to Heaven alone for its protection.

It is this that renders melancholy the most severe of all the calamities of human life ; and of all the remedies against it, there is none more efficacious than a calm and silent employment of the mind : for in solitude the weight of melancholy is lessened by the feeblest effort, by the slightest resistance. The moment we make it a rule never to be idle, and to bear our sufferings with patience, the keenest anguish of the soul flies from our resignation, yields to our submission. While we encourage a fondness for activity, and endeavour to repel the incumbent misery by moderate but continued efforts, the spirits gain new powers : a small victory leads to a greater conquest ; and the joy which success inspires, immediately destroys the notion we had entertained of endless sorrow. If the exertions of reason and virtue prove ineffectual against sickness and ill-humour, we should employ the mind upon some



engaging object which requires but little attention ; for the slightest is frequently capable of subduing the severest sorrow. The shades of melancholy disappear, the moment we fix attention on any object that interests the mind. Oftentimes, alas ! that extravagant despair, that supineness and apathy which rejects all advice, and renders us incapable of consolation, is only a concealment of our vexations, and of consequence becomes a real malady of the mind ; which it is impossible to conquer but by a firm and constant perseverance.

To men who possess a sensibility too refined, an imagination too ardent, to mix with comfort in the society of the world, and who are continually complaining of men and things, SOLITUDE is not only desirable, but absolutely necessary. He who suffers himself to be afflicted by that which scarcely excites an emotion in the breasts of other men ; who complains of those misfortunes as severe which others scarcely feel ; whose mind falls into despair unless his happiness be instantly restored, and his wants immediately satisfied ; who suffers unceasing torments from the illusions of his fancy ; who feels himself unhappy only because prosperity does not anticipate his wishes ; who murmurs against the blessings he receives, because he is ignorant of his real wants ; who flies from one amusement to another ; who is alarmed at every thing, and enjoys nothing : he, alas ! is not formed for society ; and if Solitude have not power to heal his wounded spirit, the earth certainly contains no remedy to cure him.

Men who in other respects are very rational, possessed of excellent hearts, of pious dispositions, frequently fall into disquietude and despair, but



it is almost entirely their own fault. If their despair arise, as is generally the case, from unfounded fears; if they love to torment themselves and others upon every slight inconvenience, upon the smallest derangement of their health; if they constantly resort to *medicine* for that relief which *reason* alone can afford; if they will not endeavour to repress the wanderings of their fancies; if, after having supported the acutest pains with patience, and blunted the greatest misfortunes by fortitude, they neither can nor will learn to bear the puncture of the smallest pin, to endure the lightest accidents of mortal life; they ought not to complain of the want of courage to any but themselves; such characters, who by a single effort of the understanding might look with an eye of composure and tranquility on the multiplied and fatal fires issuing from the dreadful cannon's mouth, fall under the apprehension of being fired at by pop-guns.

Firmness, resolution, and all those qualities of the soul, which form a stoic hardness of character, are much sooner acquired by a quiet communion with the heart than in the busy intercourses of mankind, where innumerable difficulties continually oppose us; where duty, servility, flattery, and fear obstruct exertion; where every thing unites to destroy our powers; and where, for this reason, men of the weakest minds and most contracted notions are always more active and popular, gain more attention, and are better received than men of enlarged and noble minds.

The mind fortifies itself with impregnable strength under the shades of Solitude against sufferings and affliction. In retirement, the frivolous attachments which steal away the soul, and



drive it wandering, as chance may direct, into a dreary void, die away. The distracting multiplicity of enjoyments are here renounced; we have experienced how little we want; perhaps have made so considerable a progress in the knowledge of ourselves, that we feel no discomposure when the Almighty chastises us with afflictions, humbles our proud spirits and vain conceits, thwarts the violence of our passion, and restores us to a lively sense of our inanity and weakness. How many important truths do we here learn, of which the worldly-minded man has no idea; truths which the torrent of vanity overwhelms in his dissipated soul! How familiarised we become with the evils attached to a state of mortality, in proportion as we cast the calm eye of reflection on ourselves and on the objects which surround us! In a state of Solitude and tranquillity, how different every thing appears! The heart expands to the most virtuous sentiments; the blush of conscience reddens on the cheek; we reach the sublimest conceptions of the mind, adopt the boldest resolutions, and observe a conduct truly irreproachable.

The unfortunate being who deploras the death of some beloved friend, constantly feels a strong desire to withdraw from the intercourse of society; while all unite to destroy the laudable inclination. They avoid all conversation with the unhappy sufferer on the subject of his loss, and think it more consolatory to surround him with a crowd of acquaintance, cold and indifferent to the event, who think their duties sufficiently discharged by paying the tributary visit, and chattering from morning till evening on the current topics of the town; as if each of their pleasantries



conveyed a balm of comfort into the wounded heart.

"*Leave me to myself!*" I exclaimed a thousand times, within two years after my arrival in GERMANY. I lost the lovely idol of my heart, the amiable companion of my life. Her departed spirit still hovers round me: the tender recollection of all that she was to me, the afflicting remembrance of all that she suffered on my account, are always present to my mind. What purity and innocence! what mildness and affability! Her death was as calm and resigned as her life was pure and virtuous! During five long months the lingering pangs of dissolution hung continually around her. One day, as she reclined upon her pillow, while I read to her "The Death of Christ" by RAMMLER, she cast her eyes over the page, and silently pointed out to me the following passage: "My breath grows weak, my days are shortened, my heart is full of affliction, and my soul prepares to take its flight." Alas! when I recall all those circumstances to my mind, and recollect how impossible it was for me to abandon the world at that moment of anguish and distress, when I carried the seeds of death within my bosom, when I had neither FORTITUDE to bear my afflictions, nor COURAGE to resist them; while I was yet pursued by malice, and outraged by calumny; in such a situation, I can easily conceive that my exclamation might be, "*Leave me to myself!*"

To be alone, far retired from the tumults and embarrassments of society, is the first and fondest desire of the heart, when, under such misfortunes, we are unhappily situated among men



who, incapable of equal feeling, have no idea of the torments we endure.

How ! to live in Solitude, to relinquish the society of men, to be buried, during life, in some wild deserted country ! Oh yes ! such a retreat affords a tender and certain consolation under all the afflictions which fasten on the heart. Such is the eternal separation of sensible and beloved friends ; a separation more grievous and terrifying than the fatal period itself which terminates existence : the heart is torn with anguish, the very ground we tread on seems to sink beneath our feet, when this horrible and hidden event divides us from those who had for so long a period been all in all to us in life, whose memory neither time nor accident can wipe away, and whose absence renders all the pleasures of the world odious to our sight. Solitude in such an event is our only resource : but to soften the grief which this eternal separation inflicts, to remove the sorrows which prey upon the poor heart, to wipe away the tears from the cheeks, we must, even in Solitude, continue to employ the mind, to excite its attention to the accomplishment of some interesting end, and lead the imagination from one object to another.

How many torments, alas ! are there that lie concealed from the observation of the world, which we must learn to bear within our own bosoms, and which can only be softened by Solitude and retirement !

Represent to yourself an unfortunate foreigner placed in a country where every one was suspicious of his character, borne down by misfortunes from every side, attacked every moment by despair ; who, during a long course of years, could



neither stoop nor sit to write, without feeling the most excruciating pains; in a country, where, from a fanatic, prejudice, every one strewed thorns and briars in his path; where, in the midst of all his afflictions, he was deprived of the object which was dearest to him in the world. Yet it was in such a country, and under these circumstances, that he at length, found a person who extended the hand of affliction towards him\*; whose voice, like a voice from Heaven, said to him, "Come, I will dry up your tears, I will inspire courage into your wounded heart. I will be the kind comforter of all your sufferings, aid you to support them, banish the remembrance of sorrow from your mind, recal your sensibility to the touching beauties of nature, and force you to acknowledge, that the Religion ~~we~~ profess is also inspired by a beneficent Deity, whose goodness strews flowers over the paths of life. You shall afterwards afford assistance to me, become part of my family, and we will read, think, feel, and lift up our hands together in orations to God. I will endeavour to charm away the silence of disgust by entertaining conversation; and, when tranquility returns, collect for you all the flowers which adorn the paths of life; discourse with you on the charms of virtue; think of you with love; treat you with esteem; rely upon you with confidence; prove to you, that the people among whom you are situated are less wicked than you conceive them to be; and perhaps that they are

\* The Author here alludes to MADAME DORINE, wife of the Counsellor of State, and daughter to the celebrated Vice-Chancellor SERRUER.



“ not so at all. I will remove from your mind  
“ all anxiety about domestic concerns; do every  
“ thing to relieve and please you: you shall  
“ taste all the happiness of an easy tranquil life.  
“ I will diligently endeavour to point out your  
“ faults, and you, in gratitude, shall also cor-  
“ rect mine: you shall form my mind, commu-  
“ nicate to me your knowledge, and preserve  
“ to me, by the assistance of God and your own  
“ talents, the felicities of my life, together with  
“ those of my husband and my children: we will  
“ love our neighbours with the same heart, and  
“ unite our endeavours to afford consolation to  
“ the afflicted and succour to the distressed.”

But if, after having experienced all this pleasure during a great number of years: if, after having enjoyed these consolations under circumstances the most critical and cruel; if, after flattering myself that her friendly hand would close my dying eyelids, that I should expire in the arms of this heroic female; if, for only obeying the Divine impulse of commiseration, my protectress should be torn for ever from the bosom of her family, obliged to leave her country, and seek a voluntary exile in a foreign land; if I should behold myself for ever deprived of this dear friend, this protecting angel, what comfort would remain for me on the face of the earth! Thus abandoned and forlorn, to what asylum could I fly? To SOLITUDE alone! there I might combat my rising griefs, and learn to support my destiny with courage.

To a heart torn, by too rigorous a destiny, from the bosom that was opened for its reception, from a bosom in which it fondly dwelt,



from an object that it dearly loved, detached from every object, at a loss were to fix its affection, or communicate its feelings. Solitude alone can administer comfort. To him who, in the cruel hour of separation, exclaims in the bitterness of his soul, "In every exertion to do good, my only reward is to give you pleasure; all the happiness of my life concentrates in the joys that you receive!" Solitude is the last and only consolation.

There are, therefore, situations from which nothing but Solitude and retirement can relieve us. For this reason, it is frequently necessary that those whom melancholy affects, should be left alone; for, as we shall now proceed to shew, they may find in Solitude an infinite variety of consolations, and many resources of comfort both for the mind and the heart.

The healthy and the sick, the happy and the miserable, the rich and the poor, all, without exception, may find infinite advantages in a religious retirement from the world. It is not, alas! in the temples of pleasure, in those meetings where every one empties to its last drop *here* the cup of folly, in the *Cóteries* occupied by vulgar gaiety, in brilliant assemblies, or at luxurious boards, that the mind grows familiar with those tender and sublime sentiments which subdue the desires of sensuality, ennoble all the enjoyments of life, raise the passing moment into importance by connecting it with the events of futurity, and banish from a transitory life the extravagant fondness for the dissipations of the world.

In Solitude we behold more near and intimately that Providence which overlooks all.



Silence continually recalls to our mind the consolatory idea, the mild and satisfactory sentiment, that the eye of the Almighty is for ever viewing the actions of his creatures; that he superintends all our movements; that we are governed by his power, and preserved by his goodness. In Solitude, the Deity is every where before us. Emancipated from the dangerous fermentations of sense, guided by nobler inclinations, possessed of pure unalterable joys, we contemplate with seriousness and vigour, with freedom and with confidence, the attainment of supreme felicity, and enjoy in thought the happiness we expect to reach. In this holy meditation, every ignoble sentiment, every painful anxiety, every worldly thought and vulgar care, vanish from the mind.

Solitude has already brought us nearer to God, when, beside all the tender and humane feelings of the heart, we feel those salutary sensations which a distrust and jealousy of our own abilities create; sensations which in public life make light and transient impressions, and fade so soon away. When at the bed of sickness I behold the efforts which the soul makes to oppose its impending dissolution from the body, and, notwithstanding, discover by the encreasing tortures the rapid advances of approaching death; when I see my unhappy patient extend his cold and trembling hands, to thank the Almighty for the smallest mitigation of his pains; when I hear his utterance checked by intermingled groans, and view the tender looks and silent anguish of his attending friends; all my powers abandon me, my heart bleeds, and I tear myself from the sorrowful scene, to pour my tears more freely over the



unhappy sufferings of humanity, to lament my own inability, and the vain confidence placed in a feeble art ; a confidence which men have been so forward to abuse. Conscious of the inefficacy of art, I never rise from my bed without thinking it a heavenly miracle that I am still alive. When I count the number of my years, I exclaim, with the liveliest gratitude, that God has preserved my life beyond my expectation. Through what a sea of dangers has his goodness conducted me ! Reflecting every moment on the weakness of my condition, and beholding men suddenly snatched away before me in the prime and vigour of life ; men who, but a few hours before, entertained no fear of death and reckoned, perhaps, on an extended length of days ; what can I do, but offer up my silent adorations to that Providence who has thus saved me from the menaces of death !

Is it possible to become wise, and escape from all the perils with which the world abounds, without renouncing its dissipations and entering into a serious examination of ourselves ? It is then only that we are able maturely to reflect upon what we hear and see ; it is only during the silent occupation of the mind that we can properly view those interesting objects to which, in order to render them more useful or permanent, we can never devote an attention sufficiently serious.

Wisdom is not to be acquired by the incessant pursuit of entertainments ; by flying, without reflection, from one party to another ; by continual conversations on low and trifling subjects ; by undertaking every thing, and doing nothing. " He who would acquire true wisdom," says a



celebrated philosopher, "must learn to live in Solitude." An uninterrupted course of dissipation stifles every virtuous sentiment. The dominion of reason is lost amidst the intoxications of pleasure; its voice is no longer heard; its authority no longer obeyed. The mind no longer strives to surmount temptations; but, instead of avoiding the snares which the passions lay in our way, we seek to find them. The precepts of religion are in no situation so little remembered, as in the ordinary dissipation of the world. Engaged in a variety of absurd pursuits, entranced in the delirium of gaiety and pleasure, inflamed by that continual inebriety which raises the passions, and stimulates the desires, all connections between God and man are broken; and we abandon the first and only source of true felicity, renounce the faculty of reason, and never think of religious duties but with levity and indifference. On the contrary, he who, entering into a serious self-examination, in silent meditation elevates his thoughts on all occasions towards his God; who considers the amphitheatre of nature, the spangled firmament of Heaven, the verdant meads enamelled with flowers, the stupendous mountains, and the silent groves, as the temples of the Divinity; who directs the emotions of his heart to the Great Author and Conductor of things; who has continually before his eyes his enlightened Providence, must most assuredly have already learned to live in pious Solitude and religious meditation.

Thus, by devoting daily only as many hours to silent reflection as are employed at the toilet or consumed at the card-table, Solitude may be rendered instrumental in leading the mind to



piety, and the heart to virtue. Meditation and reflection convey every moment greater force and solidity to the intellect, excite abhorrence of too frequent intercourses with mankind, and create disgust of their idle entertainments. We may cherish the best intentions towards our fellow-creatures, may succour them in distress, may do them all the good in our power, and yet shun the luxury of their feasts, fly from their coteries, and disdain their frivolous pursuits.

The opportunities of exercising great virtues, of performing actions of extensive utility or universal benevolence, are confined only to a few characters. But how many silent virtues are there, which every man has it in his power to perform without quitting his chamber? He who can contentedly employ himself at home, may continue their the whole year, and yet in every day of that year may contribute to the felicity of other men; he may listen to their complaints, relieve their distress, render many services to those who are about him, and extend his benevolence in various ways, without being seen by the world, or known by those on whom he confers his favours.

A strong and determined inclination for Solitude is frequently a happy omen of a pious disposition. Youth frequently experiences a vague and indefinable gloom, which, as the mind advances in reason, dies progressively away. It is during this interval that we begin to understand the human character, to form an estimate of ourselves, to perceive what we are, and learn what we ought to be. At this period, a physical change of constitution turns the operations of the soul into a new direction; conscience awakens



itself, and strongly suggests the necessity of prostrating ourselves before the throne of God. Modesty is the first lesson of adversity, and self-distrust the first proof we receive of having obtained a knowledge of ourselves. The sophistry of the passions is silent during the serious solitary hours which we pass in sincere self-examination. If we sometimes probe too deeply, and become gloomy and discontented at our situation, or fall into superstitious phrensies, the impressions, alas ! are too soon effaced. Yet even this excess, when compared with its opposite effect, with that fatal supineness which extinguishes every virtue, is a real advantage. The sincere mortification we feel on the discovery of our defects, is converted by the light of a pure and rational faith into happy ease and perfect tranquility. The fanatic enthusiast presents himself before the Almighty much oftener than the supercilious wit, who scoffs at religion, and calls piety a weakness.

The study of ourselves is so extremely rare, that we ought to prize every thing we obtain by it as dear and precious treasures. To induce us to renounce our flighty futile dissipations ; to conquer the discontent which drives us wandering from place to place in search of new objects ; to force us into an examination of ourselves ; Grief must awaken us from our lethargic pleasures, Sorrow must open our eyes to the follies of the world, and the cup of Adversity often embitter our lips. From a conviction of this truth it was, that one of the greatest philosophers of Germany, the celebrated Mr. GARVE, exclaimed to Dr. SPALDING and MYSELF, "I am indebted to my malady, for having led me



“ to make a closer scrutiny and more accurate  
“ observation of my own character.”

The powers of religion and philosophy are, in Solitude, united to conduct us to the same end. Both of them teach us to examine our hearts; both of them tell us, that we cannot guard with too serious an apprehension against the dangers of fanaticism, nor decry them with too loud a voice; but they also instruct us, that if virtue cannot be instilled into the soul without its undergoing some convulsions, yet we ought not to be discouraged by the fear of danger. It is not in the moment of joy, when we turn our eyes from God, and think not of eternity, that we experience these salutary convulsions of the soul. Even religion, with all her powers cannot produce them so soon as a corporeal malady or mental affliction. But if the soul advances too slowly in the heroic course of virtue; if, amidst the bustle of the world, the suggestions of conscience lose their power, let every one retire, as frequently as he possibly can, into Solitude, and there prostrate himself before God and his own heart.

In the last moments of life, it is certain that we all wish we had lived more in Solitude, in a greater intimacy with ourselves, and in a closer communion with God. Pressed by their recollection, we then clearly perceive, that all our faults have happened from not shunning the snares of the world; from not having kept a watchful eye upon the wanderings of the heart, in the midst of those dangers by which it was surrounded. If we were to oppose the sentiments of a solitary man, who had passed his life in pious conference with God, to the senti-



ments which occupy the minds of dissipated men who never think of their Creator, and sacrifice their whole existence to the enjoyment of the moment: If we compare the character of a WISE MAN, who reflects in silence on the importance of eternity, with that of the FASHIONABLE BEING, who consumes all his time at ridottos, balls, and assemblies; we shall then perceive that an inclination for Solitude, a dignified retirement, a desire of having a select friend, and a rational society, can alone afford us true pleasure, and give us, beyond all the vain enjoyments of the world, consolation in death, and hopes of eternal life.

It is, however, upon the bed of death that we discover, more than in any other situation, the great difference between THE JUST MAN, who has passed his days in calm religious contemplation, and THE MAN OF THE WORLD, whose thoughts have only been employed to feed his passions, and gratify his desires. A life passed amidst the tumultuous dissipation of the world, even when unfilled by the commission of any crime, concludes, alas! very differently from that which has been spent in Solitude, in innocence, in virtue.

As example teaches more effectually than precept, as curiosity is more alive to recent facts than to remote transactions, I shall here relate the history of a man of family and fashion, who, a few years since shot himself in London; from which it will appear, that men possessed even of the best feelings of the heart may be rendered extremely miserable, by suffering their principles to be corrupted by the practices of the world.



THE Honourable Mr. DAMER, the eldest son of LORD MILTON, was five-and-thirty years of age when he put a period to his existence by means perfectly correspondent to the principles on which he had lived. He had espoused a rich heiress, the daughter-in-law of GENERAL CONWAY. Nature had endowed him with extraordinary talents; and if he had employed them to nobler purposes, his death must have made the deepest impression on every bosom. Unhappily, however, a most infatuated love of dissipation destroyed all the powers of his mind, and some of the more excellent qualities of his heart. His houses, his carriages, his horses, his liveries, surpassed in magnificence and elegance every thing that is sumptuous in the metropolis of England. The income he enjoyed was splendid; but not being quite sufficient to defray all his expences, he felt himself under the necessity of borrowing, and he obtained a loan of one hundred and twenty thousand pounds. A large portion of the money was immediately employed to succour those of his friends who appeared to be distressed; for his sentiments were tender and compassionate: but his sensibility to the wants of others at length obliged him to open his eyes to his own. The situation in which he found his affairs led him to despair: he retired to a brothel, sent for four women of the town, and passed four hours with infinite gaiety and spirits in their company. On the near approach of midnight, he requested they would retire; and in a few moments afterwards, drawing from his pocket, a loaded pistol, which he had carried about with him all the afternoon, blew out his brains. He had passed the evening



with these women in the same manner as he had been used to pass many others with different women of the same description, without insisting on favours which they would most willingly have granted. The common conversation of such interviews, or at most the liberty of a salute, was all he desired or expected from them in return for his money. The gratitude he felt for the temporary oblivion which these intercourses occasioned, ripened in his bosom into the feelings of the warmest friendship.

A celebrated actress on the London theatre, whose *conversations* had already drained him of considerable sums of money, requested of him, only three days before his death, to lend her five and twenty guineas. He returned an answer, that he had not at that time more than eight or ten guineas at his command, and these he lent to her; but he immediately borrowed the remainder, and gave her the sum she required.

This unhappy young man, shortly before the fatal catastrophe, had written to his father and disclosed the real state of his affairs; and the night, the very night on which he terminated his existence, his affectionate parent, the good LORD MILTON, arrived in London, for the purpose of paying all the debts of his son. Thus lived and died this destitute and dissipated man! How different from the life and death of the innocent and virtuous!

I trust I shall be forgiven in reciting here the story of a Young Lady whose memory I am anxious to preserve; for I can with great truth say of her, as PETRARCH said of his beloved LAURA, "The world is unacquainted with the excellence  
" of her character; for she was only known to



“ those whom she has left behind to bewail her  
“ fate.”

Solitude in her mind supplied the place of the world ; for she knew no other pleasures than those which a retired and virtuous life affords. Submitting with pious resignation to all the dispensation of Heaven, she sustained, although naturally of a weak constitution, every affliction with undiminished fortitude. Mild, good, tender, yet enduring her incessant sufferings without a murmur or a sigh ; timed, reserved, but disclosing all the feelings of her soul with a kind of filial enthusiasm ; of this description was the superior character of whom I now write ; a character who convinced me, by her fortitude under the severest misfortunes, how much strength Solitude is capable of conveying to the minds even of the feeblest beings. Diffident of her own powers, she relied with the most perfect confidence upon God, and guided herself in every thing by my precepts. Taught by my experience, submitting to my judgment, she felt for me the most ardent affection ; and, without making any professions, convinced me by her actions of its sincerity. Willingly would I have sacrificed my life to save her ; and I am satisfied she would have given her own for me. My greatest happiness consisted in doing everything that I thought was most agreeable to her. She frequently presented me with a rose, a present from which she knew I received considerable delight ; and from her hand it was superior to the richest treasure. A lady of almost a singular kind, a hæmorrhage of the lungs, suddenly deprived me of the comfort of this beloved child, even while I supported her in my arms. Acquainted with her



constitution, I immediately saw the blow was mortal. How frequently, during that fatal day, did my wounded bleeding heart bend me on my knees before my God, to implore her recovery ! But I concealed my feelings from her observation. Although sensible of her danger, she never communicated the least apprehension. Smiles arose upon her cheeks when ever I entered or quitted the chamber. Although worn down by this fatal distemper, a prey to the most corroding griefs, the sharpest and most intolerable pains, she made no complaint. She mildly answered all my questions by some short sentence, but without entering into any detail. Her decay and approaching dissolution became obvious to the eye ; but to the last moment of her life, her countenance preserved a serenity equal to the purity of her mind and the affectionate tenderness of her heart.

Thus I beheld my dear, my only daughter, after a lingering sufferance of nine long months, expire in my arms ! Exclusive of the usual internal appearances which attend a consumption of the lungs, the liver was extremely large, the stomach uncommonly small and contracted, and the viscera much overcharged. So many attacks, alas ! were needless to the conquest. She had been the submissive victim of ill health from her earliest infancy ; her appetite was almost gone when we left SWISSERLAND ; a residence which she quitted with her usual sweetness of temper, and without discovering the smallest regret, although a young man, as handsome in his person as he was amiable in the qualities of his mind, the object of her first, her only affection, a few weeks afterwards put an end to his existence in despair.



The few happy days we passed at HANOVER, where she was much respected and beloved, she amused herself by composing religious prayers, which were afterwards found among her papers, and in which she implores death to afford her a speedy relief from her pains: she wrote also many letters, always affecting, and frequently sublime, during the same period. They were filled with expressions of the same desire speedily to re-unite her soul with the author of her days. The last words my dear, my well-beloved child uttered, amidst the most painful agonies, were these: "To-day I shall taste the joys of Heaven!"

We should be unworthy of this bright example, if after having seen the severest sufferings sustained by a female in the earliest period of life, and of the weakest constitution by nature, we permitted our minds to be dejected by misfortunes, when by the smallest degree of courage we may be enabled to surmount them. A female who, under the anguish of inexpressible torments, never permitted the sigh of complaint to escape from her lips; but submitted with silent resignation to the will of Heaven, in hope of meeting with reward hereafter. She was ever active, invariably mild, always compassionate to the miseries of others. But we, who have before our eyes the sublime instructions which a character thus virtuous and noble has given us under the pressure of a fatal disease, under the horrors of continued and bitter agonies; we, who like her aspire to the attainment of the glorious seat of happiness and peace, refuse to submit to the smallest sacrifice, make no endeavour to oppose the storms of fortune by the exertion of courage, or to acquire that patience and



resignation which a candid examination of our own hearts, and a silent communion with God, would certainly afford.

Sensible and unfortunate beings ! the lightest afflictions when compared with griefs like mine, drive you, at present, to disquietude and despair. But you may give credit to experience, they will eventually raise your minds above the low considerations of the world, and give a strength to your powers which you now conceive to be impossible. You now think yourselves sunk into the deepest abyss of suffering and sorrow ; but the time will soon arrive, when you will perceive yourselves in that happy situation which lies between an attachment to the earth and a fond devotion to Heaven. You will then feel a calm repose, be susceptible of pleasures equally substantial and sublime ; your minds will be withdrawn from the tumultuous anxieties of life, and filled with serene and comfortable sentiments of immortality. Blessed, supremely blessed is that being who knows the value of a life passed in retirement and tranquillity ; who is capable of enjoying the silence of the groves, and the retirement of rural Solitude. The soul then tastes celestial pleasures, even under the deepest impressions of sorrow and dejection ; regains its strength, collects new courage, and acts with perfect freedom. The eye looks with steadiness on the transient sufferings of disease, the mind no longer feels a dread of Solitude, and we learn to cultivate, during the remainder of our lives, a bed of roses round even the tomb of death.



## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

## THE INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE UPON THE MIND.

THE inestimable value of liberty can only be conceived by minds that are free. Slaves are forced to be content even in their bondage. He who has been long tossed about by the vicissitudes of fortune ; who has learned from the sufferings of his own experience to form a just estimate of men and things ; who can examine every object with impartiality ; and, walking in the steep and narrow paths of virtue, derive his happiness from his own mind, may be accounted FREE.

The path of virtue is indeed rugged, dreary, and unsocial ; but it conducts the mind from painful difficulties to sublime repose, and gently carries us over the acclivities of life into the delightful and extensive plains of happiness and ease. The love of Solitude when cultivated to a certain extent at an early period of our lives, inspires the heart with a noble independence ; especially in the breasts of those youths, whose easy uncorrupted souls are yet susceptible of virtuous impressions : it is to such characters alone that my precepts can prove useful ; it is to such characters alone I here pretend to point out the way which leads to true felicity.



I do not, however, wish to conduct them through the paths of misery to the retreats of Solitude, but would rather induce them to seek retirement from a dislike to dissipation, a distaste to the idle pleasures of life, a contempt for the treacherous professions of the world, a dread of being seduced by its insinuating and deceitful gaieties.

Many men have acquired and experienced in Solitude that superiority of genius which enables its possessors to command events. Like the majestic cedar which braves the fury of the wildest wind there are many champions of virtue who have resisted in retirement the storms of vice. It has indeed happened, that some men have retained even in Solitude all the weaknesses of human nature; but there are also many others who have proved that wise men cannot become degenerate even in the most dreary seclusion. Visited by the august spirits of the dead, left to listen to their own thoughts, and secluded from the sight of every breathing object, they must converse with God alone.

There are two periods of life in which Solitude becomes peculiarly useful: In youth to acquire a fund of useful information, to form the outline of the character we mean to support, and to fix the modes of thinking we ought through life invariably to pursue: in age, to cast a retrospective eye on the course of life we have led, to reflect on the events that have happened, upon all the flowers we have gathered, upon all the tempests we have survived.

LORD BOLINGBROKE says, that there is not a deeper nor a finer observation in all LORD BACON's works than the following: "We



“ must chuse betimes such *virtuous objects* as are  
 “ proportioned to the means we have of pursu-  
 “ ing them, and as belong particularly to the  
 “ *stations* we are in, and the duties of those sta-  
 “ tions. We must *determine* and *fix* our minds  
 “ in such a manner upon them, that the pursuit  
 “ of them may become the *business*, and the at-  
 “ tainment of them the *end* of our whole lives”.  
 “ Thus we shall imitate the great operations of  
 “ nature, and not the feeble, slow, and imper-  
 “ fect operations of art. We must not pro-  
 “ ceed, in forming the moral character, as a  
 “ statuary proceeds in forming a statue, who  
 “ works sometimes on the face, sometimes on  
 “ one part, and sometimes on another; but we  
 “ must proceed, and it is in our power to pro-  
 “ ceed, as nature does in forming a flower,  
 “ or any other of her productions; *redimenta*  
 “ *partium omnium simul parit, et producit*; she  
 “ throws out altogether and at once the whole  
 “ system of every being, and the rudiments of  
 “ all the parts.”

Ye amiable youths, from whose minds the ar-  
 tifices and gaieties of the world have not yet  
 obliterated the precepts of a virtuous education;  
 who are not yet infected with its inglorious va-  
 nities; who, still ignorant of the tricks and  
 blandishments of seduction, have preserved in  
 your souls the desire to perform some glorious  
 action, and retained the powers to accomplish  
 it; who, in the midst of feasting, dancing, and

\* LORD BOLINGBROKE, in his “*Idea of a Patriot King.*”  
 has paraphrased the original, “*Ut continuo tentat et efformet se*  
 “ *animus, una opera, in virtutes omnes,*” in order to apply it  
 with greater effect to the occasion for which he quotes it.



assemblies, feel an inclination to escape from their unsatisfactory delights. SOLITUDE will afford you a safe asylum. Let the voice of experience recommend you to cultivate a fondness for domestic pleasure to rouse and fortify your souls to noble deeds, to acquire that fine and noble spirit which teaches you to estimate the characters of men and the pleasures of society, by their intrinsic values.

You will find it absolutely necessary to force yourselves from a world too trifling and insignificant to afford you any great examples. It is in studying the characters of the Greeks the Romans, the English, that you must learn to surmount every difficulty. In what nation will you find more celebrated instances of human greatness? What people possess more valour and courage, more firmness, more knowledge, a greater love for the arts and sciences? But do not deceive yourselves by believing that wearing *the hair cut short* will make you *Englishmen*. You must, instead of that, eradicate the vices, subdue the weaknesses of your nature, and only imitate them in their peculiar greatness. It is the love of liberty, the qualities of courage, penetration, sublimity of sentiment, and strength of reason that constitute the true *Englishman*, and not their half boots and jockey hats. It is *virtue* alone, and not *titles*, that elevate the characters of men. An illustrious descent is certainly an advantage, but not a merit. I honour you for having already formed a proper estimate of these splendid trifles, for having already learned that he who venerates such little objects can never attain to greatness. Let women only boast



of hereditary descent, of a line of ancestors, who, during a course of centuries, were perhaps distinguished from the rest of mankind merely by the splendour of their equipage, while the humble citizen was forced to follow on foot. In tracing your genealogies, reckon those only among the number of your ancestors who have performed some great and glorious action, whose fame shines with brilliancy in every page of their country's history, and whose characters are cited with applause and admiration in distant nations: but never lose sight of this important truth, that no one can be truly great without a knowledge of himself.

In your journey through life two ways lie open to your choice. The one will conduct you to a fragrant garden, through delightful groves perfumed with the sweetest odours, where a verdant bed, bedecked with roses, will invite your enchanted senses to a soft repose; this is the path of pleasure which the multitude are easily seduced to follow, and where music, dancing, and love, offer to every sense such variety of delight. The other is a less frequented way, rugged and uneven, the progress through it slow, where, while the wearied passenger toils along, he frequently tumbles down some dangerous precipice, which to him appeared at greater distance. Here the cries of savage animals alone are heard, the incessant croakings of the boding raven, the sharp and shivering hisses of the wily serpent; and the silent unbounded desert which reigns around inspires the mind with terror and affright. The path of pleasure leads us to the world; the rude and rugged way is the road to



honour. The one conducts you through society to places and employments either in the city or at court; the other, sooner or later, will lead you into Solitude. Upon the one road you will perhaps become a villain; a villain rendered dear and amiable by your vices to society. Upon the other road, it is true, you may be hated and despised; but you will become A MAN; a man after my own heart.

The rudiments of a great character must be formed in Solitude. It is there alone that the solidity of thought, the fondness for activity, the abhorrence of indolence, which constitute the hero and the sage, are first acquired. Many celebrated Germans of my acquaintance lived solitary lives unconnected with society, during their residence at the university. They shunned the fashionable vices of the collegians, and preserved their native purity; they adopted a stoicism, and preserved not only their chastity, but their application to study. They are now become ministers of state, celebrated writers, and great philosophers, who have diffused wisdom, banished prejudice, and from their earliest youth opened new roads in life utterly unknown to vulgar minds.

A tribute of the highest gratitude is due to the noble character who has observed, “ When you  
“ behold a youth of solid parts withdraw himself  
“ from the world, fall into a low and melancholy  
“ humour, become silent in company, and testify  
“ by the severity of his manners and coldness  
“ of his feelings, that the contemptible  
“ beings with whom he has associated have inspired  
“ his soul with disgust; if you perceive  
“ that his mind emits its rays like flashes of



“ lightning in the obscurity of a dark night, and  
“ then falls into a long and silent calm ; if you  
“ discover that he feels himself surrounded by a  
“ painful void, and that every object which  
“ presents itself only inspires his mind with new  
“ aversion and disgust ; you then behold, not-  
“ withstanding, he has not openly complained,  
“ a happy plant, which only requires the culti-  
“ vation of a judicious hand to bring forth its  
“ fruits, and disclose its beauties. O ! apply to  
“ it a fostering care. It will become worthy of  
“ your kindness : and he who stops the progress  
“ of its life, is the most detestable of murder-  
“ ers.”

To rear a youth of this description would form the joy and pleasure of my future days. I would nourish him in my very heart. I would watch over him with the tenderest care. I would conceal his growing virtues from the jealous and malignant observation of envious eyes ; prevent their endeavours to suppress the efforts of a genius surpassing their own ; and with a single whisper I would drive away those noxious vermin, enervated and insipid men of fashion, from my healthful plant. If, however, such an amiable youth did not immediately listen to my voice, and become obedient to my precepts, if he did not altogether despise the manners of the world, I would let him occasionally fall among the rocks of life, and permit him to be gently wrecked in situations where experience, deficient of the powers of youth, would have escaped from danger.

Solitude sometimes begets a degree of arrogance and obstinacy ; but a little experience in the world soon eradicates these defects. The



misanthropy of these noble youths, their contempt of folly, and their pride of spirit, changes by the maturity of age into dignity of character, and gives them a more generous intrepidity, a more exalted contempt of that fear which youth naturally entertain in the society of men. The satires they once dreaded then lose all their keenness, and only form a contrast of what things are with what they ought to be. Their contempt for vice rises into a noble enthusiasm for virtue? and they extract from the long intellectual war of experience a complete knowledge of the world, and a compassionate feeling which, however it may occasionally swerve, will never die.

But there is also a science of the heart too frequently neglected, and with which it is necessary, at least as far as it is possible, to familiarise ourselves in early youth. This is the noble science of philosophy, which forms the characters of men, which teaches us to attain the end we wish rather by the blandishments of love than by the efforts of power; a science which corrects the cold dictates of reason by the warm feelings of the heart, opens to view the dangers to which they are exposed, animates the dormant faculties of the mind, and prompts them to the practice of all the virtues.

DION had been brought up in all the baseness and servility of courts; he was accustomed to a life of softness and effeminacy, and, which is more pernicious, to a life of great magnificence, profusion, and pleasure of every kind: but no sooner had he read the divine PLATO, no sooner had he tasted of that refined philosophy which leads to a life of virtue, than his whole soul became deeply enamoured of its charms.



The inspiration which DION caught from reading the works of PLATO, every mother may silently, and unperceived, pour into the mind of her child. Philosophy, from the lips of a wise and sensible mother, penetrates into the mind through the feelings of the heart. Who is not fond of walking even through the roughest and most difficult path, when conducted by the hand they love? What species of instruction can excel the sweet lessons which proceed from a female mind endowed with a sound understanding, an elevated style of thinking, and whose heart feels all the affection that her precepts inspire? Oh! may every mother so endowed be blessed with a child who fondly retires with her to her closet, and listens with delight to her instructions; who, with a book in his pocket, loves to climb among the rocks, alone; who, when engaged in rural sport, throws himself at the foot of some venerable tree, and seeks rather to trace out great and illustrious characters in the pages of PLUTARCH, than to toil for game in the thickets of the surrounding woods. The wishes of a mother are accomplished when the Solitude and silence of the forests excite such thoughts in the mind of her beloved child\*; when he begins to think that there are still greater characters than the Burgomaster and Counsellor of the town, or even than the noble Lord of the surrounding villages; characters who enjoy more pure and elevated pleasures than the gaming-table or assemblies are capable of affording; characters who at every interval of leisure seek the shades

\* "*Mirum est,*" says the younger Pliny, "*ut animus agitatione motoque corporis excitetur. Jam undique silvæ et Solitudo ipsorumque illud silentium, quod venationi datur, magnæ cogitationis incitamenta sunt.*"



of Solitude with rapture and delight ; in whose minds the love of literature and philosophy has dwelt from their earliest infancy ; whose hearts these studies have warmed and animated at every subsequent period of their lives ; and who amidst the greatest dangers preserve that delightful taste which has power to banish melancholy from the deepest cavern, and dejection from the most frightful desert.

But suppose a son thus educated at length fixed in the metropolis ; think how every object must excite disgust in his breast, and render him unhappy. It is therefore proper to instruct him, that a wise and sensible man, whatever may be his situation in life, his age, or the country he inhabits may find in Solitude innumerable resources against the insipidity of society and all the false and deceitful joys of the world.

The provincial towns possess many advantages over great and populous cities, by bringing us back to a knowledge of ourselves. With what superior pleasure do we pass our time, how much more leisure, liberty, and quietude we enjoy in an humble village than in a great city, where the mind is continually distracted by too great variety of objects ! Here we live contented with ourselves, without being every morning tormented with a number of messages, by incessant proposals of some new scheme to kill the day. Here we are not necessitated, to sacrifice every domestic care, all the occupations of the mind, even the sweet converse of those we love, to endless visits. The quietude of rural retirement affords us opportunity to follow the course of our sentiments and ideas, to examine whether they are just, before we determine on our choice



in great cities, on the contrary, men act first, and reflect on their conduct afterwards. In a village, the impressions we receive are more lively and profound; whilst in great cities, time is entirely employed to create amusements, which vanish the moment they are approached; the bosom enjoys no repose, and while it sighs for rest, the hope, desire, ambition, duty, languor, disgust, and contrition which it eternally feels, drives it for ever away.

But the minds of those who have retired to the calm scenes of rural life, are frequently as vacant and deserted as the hamlets in which they live; and they find the leisure, and happy leisure which they enjoy without knowing its value, tedious and irksome. There are, indeed, very few who have acquired the art of rendering Solitude useful and rational. Men of rank proudly fancy that their honour would be degraded by the company of rustics, and, in consequence of this mistaken idea, prefer a life of constraint, avoid all intercourse, and live in splendid languor, rather than enjoy a free and happy life with rational and honest peasants. They ought to adopt a conduct directly the reverse, especially when they are discontented with themselves: they ought to mix familiarly in the company of all honest men, and acquire the esteem of every one by their kindness and attentions. The lowliest clown capable of communicating a new thought, or of raising one agreeable sentiment in the mind, is on that account a very interesting companion to a man who is at a loss how to employ his time, who is tormented by vexation and ill-humour. Those to whom time is a burden, should not despise even the humblest character; and in the rural



retreat, the shepherd and the King should live on equal terms, forget the paltry distinctions of birth, and all the prejudices which the manners of the world have raised respecting the difference of their situation. This conduct would at least be more pleasing than to hear a rustic reprobating the venality of the nobility, only because the gentlemen of his neighbourhood refuse to admit him into their company.

The only way, as it appears to me, by which men of distinction can live happy in the country, is to deport themselves peaceably and affably to every one; to feel and to exercise an universal attention and kind concern for the comfort of others, and to grant them as much of their time and conversation as they shall think proper.

It is impossible to conceive what advantages the mind gains in the Solitude of a sequestered village, when it once begins to feel disgust at the tiresome intercourses of the great world. Life is no where so completely enjoyed, the happy days of youth are no where more advantageously employed; a rational mind can no where find greater opportunities of employing its time; the dangers even of Solitude itself are no where sooner learned, or more easily avoided. Every little village may be considered as a convent, where a small society of persons, distant and detached from the world, are confined to few ideas; where, for that reason, the passions of the wicked ferment and discharge themselves with greater force; and where calm and honest minds must associate with congenial characters, or retire to Solitude in their humble cell.

Small towns resemble each other in certain material points, and only differ in the manner



by which they are governed. The mind is never subjected to a more odious tyranny than that which prevails in these little republics; where not only the rich citizen erects himself into a proud master over his less wealthy equals, but where the contracted notions of this little tyrant become, if unopposed, the standard of reason to all the town.

The members of small republics care only for themselves, and feel little anxiety about any thing that passes beyond their own limits. The all-powerful and imperious Governor considers his little territory as the universe. His breath alone decides every question that is proposed at the GUILD-HALL; and the rest of his time is wholly occupied in maintaining his authority over the minds of his fellow-citizens, in relating anecdotes of families, circulating superstitious tales, talking of the price of corn, the collection of tythes, the rents of his manors, hay-harvest, vintage-time, or the next market. Next to God, he is within his own little town the greatest man upon the face of the earth. The humble honest citizen stand with fear and trembling in the presence of his redoubtable majesty; for he knows that he is able to ruin him by an ammediate process. The wrath of an upstart magistrate is more terrible than the thunder of Heaven; for this soon passes away, but that remains for ever. The good judges of a provincial town raise their proud heads, and look down with contempt on the humble suitors; govern, order, censure, and condemn, without regard to truth or justice; and their approbation or dislike establishes in credit, or consigns to infamy.



The inhabitants of these towns are in general much addicted to Law : an attorney is in their eyes the brightest genius ; the sacred voice of Reason is an empty sound ; in vain she cries aloud, for they only believe that right which the court of justice shall decree. If one among them should absent himself from their meetings, and, yielding to reflection, should think and act with liberality or candour, they suspect him of some intention to impose on them ; for, except in the religious order, they have no idea of a studious man ; and language will not furnish any word expressive of the high contempt in which they hold a literary character. They are ignorant that *reason* and *superstition* are contradictory terms. The man who smiles at their credulity in believing that some misfortune is impending, because a hen has laid her egg before their door, a crow has croaked upon the chimney-top, or a mouse has run along the floor, cannot, in their idea, possess the least religion. They are yet ignorant that men are no longer considered free-thinkers, for humbly doubting whether the frequent spots in linen announce the death of some beloved relation. They know not, alas ! that it is possible to become servicable to mankind, without having ever opened their lips in the town-hall ; and that, at all events, they may hereafter be noticed by the really great and good, notwithstanding they have happened to incur the displeasure of the great men of their little town. They are unconscious that there are men of independent spirits in the world, and that they are the only beings who would so tamely endure a mean submission to the little tyrant or their poor domain. They do not feel that an



honest man will only bow before the Deity himself, only submit to the laws of his country, only reverence superior talents, obey virtue, respect merit, and smile at the vain wrath and ludicrous appearance of the provincial magistrate, when he receives him in anger with his hat upon his head. They do not perceive that SLANDER, the common scourge of every country-town, is only the vice of those narrow minds who visit their neighbour merely to spy out his errors, and report with increased malevolence whatever they can find wrong, either in his house, his kitchen, or his cellar. In short, they who are ignorant of so many things, cannot be apprised, that they would soon tire of the idle talk and chatter of a country-town, that they would no longer amuse themselves in picking out their neighbour's faults, if they were once acquainted with the advantages of solitude; with what a noble ardour would they boldly proceed through the road of science, and, superior to the meanness of envy, free from the disgrace of calumny, would steadily pursue the path of virtue with hardiness and vigour.

A determined resolution to lead a life of Solitude is the only remedy that can be adopted in a situation like this. An universal philanthropy for all the world will not silence the tongue of envy; for even to such a conduct the world will always impute interested motives; we must therefore live without affording such opportunities to calumny. and, with the exception of those whom we love and revere, turn our backs on the rest of mankind.

A virtuous young man, who perhaps aspires to advance himself in life, will not in the world



find the least assistance. In no one of the fashionable circles will he meet with information or encouragement; he will neither make himself known or beloved; and if he should excite attention, he will not be understood; they will consider him as a weak ridiculous character, who, instead of seeking by adulation to gain the interest of the great and powerful, prefers the pleasure of writing or reading by himself. In vain has he been reared in the bosom of a liberal and enlightened family; in vain has he received his education among the noblest characters; in vain are his principles established by a correspondence with the best and most learned philosophers of the age; for these advantages only afford greater inducement to oppress his activity and stop his course.

Does the ear hear or the heart feel all this in a provincial town, to which the refinements of the metropolis have not yet spread? What man will continue to patronize him, unless he becomes dexterous in affording useful accommodation to those in whose hands the whole power resides; from whom alone hunger can receive bread, or industry procure employment; to whose will every thing is submitted; who direct and govern every movement; and by whose nod, honour, fame, esteem, are conferred or taken away? His mind must cautiously conceal the superiority of its knowledge; his eyes must appear blind to what he sees; his heart seem senseless of what he feels; he must constantly listen to a loose and frothy conversation, during which, however fatiguing it may be, he is denied the privilege of yawning, and is ruined for ever, if, by his silence, he permits the shadow



of dissatisfaction to appear. He will be despised as a man of sense and understanding, notwithstanding he uses every endeavour to be thought otherwise\*. Surrounded by so much deformity, both he and his friends might blush for want of that distinguishing eminence upon the back, but that he hears them gravely talk at the *Hotel de Ville* upon the important care of a stable, much oftener than they meet in *London* and *Versailles* to decide upon the fate of Europe; and must sit with as much attention to hear them argue upon the right of a partition-wall, as if he was placed in the synod of the gods. Perceiving, therefore, that presumption, ignorance, and proud stupidity are infinitely in higher estimation than the noblest exercise of reason: that men of the dullest apprehensions are the most forward and impudent; that their vain and idle boastings alone model the wit and direct the opinion of the day; that envy fastens itself most inveterately upon the enlightened and well-informed; that philosophy, is considered as a contemptable delirium, and liberty mistaken for a spirit of revolt: perceiving, in short, that it is impossible to succeed, unless by means of the most servile complaisance and the most degrading submission, what can save a sensible and ingenious youth from the perils of such a scene but SOLITUDE?

The poor poet MARTIAL†, on his return

\* "A man of an enlightened mind," says HELVETIUS, "with whatever address he may conceal his character, can never so exactly resemble a fool as a fool resembles himself."

† "Accedit his," says MARTIAL, in the preface to the Twelfth Book of his Epigrams, "*municipalium rubigo domum et judicii loco livor—adversus quod difficile est habere quotidie bonum stomachum.*"



to *Bibilis*, the place of his nativity, in *Spain*, after having lived thirty-four years among the most learned and enlightened men of *Rome*, found nothing but a dreary desert, a frightful Solitude. Unable to form a society which could afford him the smallest pleasure, a painful languor preyed upon his mind. Forced to associate with persons who felt no pleasure, in the elegant delights of literature, who possessed no knowledge of the sciences, he sighed incessantly to re-visit the beloved metropolis where he had acquired such universal fame and approbation; where his good sense, his penetration, and sagacity were praised; where his writings, were promised immortality by the admiration of the Younger *PLINY*, to whom they appeared to possess equal sharpness, wit, and ease; whilst on the contrary, in the stupid town of *Bibilis* his fame only acquired him that which in small cities will ever attend an excellent character, envy and contempt.

In general, however, in all small towns the mind regains by occasional Solitude that which it has lost by its commerce with the world. If it be absolutely necessary that you should be absurd through politeness, and blind with your eyes completely open; if, in the insipid circles of fashion, you are obliged to conceal your ideas, and subdue your feelings; if you are forced to listen with attention to that which you would rather be deaf than hear; if you must be chained to the slavery of the gaming table, although there is no punishment to you so severe; if every happy thought must be strangled in its birth, all brilliancy of expression suppressed, the locks of love concealed, and honest truth disguised; if



your whole time must be devoted to please characters who are ignorant of your merit;—O REFLECT! —that in such a situation the enervated spirit lies buried in cold obscurity, like the fire in the flint untouched by steel; that your soul may languish many years in this dangerous apathy; and making a noble effort, fly from the feasts and coteries of your corrupted city, retire into the tranquility of domestic comfort, seek the silence of the groves, live in the society of your own heart, and taste, as your reward, the charms of that inestimable liberty which you have so long neglected to obtain.

Freed from the world, the veil which dimmed the sight will immediately vanish; the clouds which obscured the light of reason disappear; the painful burthen which oppressed the soul is alleviated; we no longer wrestle with misfortunes, because we know how to soften them; we no longer murmur against the dispensations of Providence, but reflect with calmness and serenity on the advantages we have derived from Solitude. The contented heart soon acquires the habit of patience; every corroding care flies from our breast on the wings of gaiety; and on every side agreeable and interesting scenes present themselves to our view: the brilliant sun sinking behind the lofty mountains, tinging their snow-crowned summits with gold; the feathered choir hastening to their mossy homes, to taste the sweets of calm repose; the proud crowing of the amorous cock; the slow march of the oxen returning from their daily toil; the noble activity of the generous steed: surrounded by such objects, we receive the visits of intruders with an open air, and, provided they do not too fre-



quently interrupt the pleasures of our retreat, we reconcile our hearts to all mankind.

But it is still more necessary to save ourselves from the dangers of the metropolis than from those of the provincial towns. The follies and vices of high-life are much more contagious than those of the simple citizen. How soon the finest beams of the imagination die away! How soon does goodness lose its power where sense and truth are constantly despised; where strong and energetic minds inspire aversion; and the virtues are thrown aside as an inconvenient and oppressive yoke! How soon does the human mind become weak and superficial, when separated from those by whom it might be enlightened and adorned! How suddenly do all the finer feelings of the heart, and the noblest efforts of the mind, decay in the company of those ostentatious characters who affect to disdain all taste, all pleasures, in *mixed societies*.\*

The great and fashionable, however, are in every country esteemed the best company; but the *great*, unhappily, are not in truth always the *best*, however they may think proper to condemn the inferior orders of mankind. Whoever can deduce his nobility through a course of sixteen descents, the value of his character is invariably fixed: the courts of princes and the mansions of the great are open to receive him; and where merit is overlooked, he almost universally acquires precedence over the man whose merit is his only recommendation; but those qualities

\* The French is, "*Assemblées sans œuvre mêlée*; to which is subjoined the following explanation: "These, in the style of the German nobility, are assemblies from which not only all *commoners* are excluded, but all those whose nobility even is liable to the least suspicion."



which alone can render him valuable as a MAN, his EXCELLENCY must learn in societies where the powers of the mind and the virtues of the heart alone confer dignity and distinction. Let such a character, if he should chance to find one solitary moment while he is waiting in the antichamber of a prince, examine with rational calmness all those high prerogatives of which he is so proud; which, in his estimation, place him so much above the ordinary level of mankind, and induce him to retrace his descent to the creation of the world; and he will find, that titles and genealogies without MERIT resemble those air-balloons which rise high only in proportion to their want of weight.

In almost every country, however, these titles of nobility separate a certain class of men from their fellow-citizens, who are in general better informed, more wise, more virtuous, and not unfrequently possessed of that true nobility, a great and honourable character! Men who have nothing to depend on for their fame, rank, or establishment in the world, but a line of ancestry, not always the most respectable; who, relying solely on the merit of their birth, never seek to acquire any other, because it is the only merit of which they have any idea, have in all companies the highest precedence. It is true, that such men are generally acquainted with the newest modes of dress, conduct with superior skill the varying fashions, understand the BONTON, exemplify the etiquette and manners of the day, and, conceiving they were formed for the refinements of sensuality and voluptuousness, fancy themselves of course endowed with the most delicate and sensible faculties.



Languor and disgust, however, penetrate even into those illustrious assemblies from whence even the pure and ancient nobility exclude the profane vulgar. This proposition may perhaps at first view appear a paradox. But listen to the manner in which a lady, whose personal qualifications rendered her more respectable than even the splendour of her birth, explained this ænigma :

“ The men of whom our select parties are  
 “ composed, do not always possess the same taste  
 “ and sentiment with respect to these assemblies ;  
 “ but it is still more rare for the women to be  
 “ really fond of them. It is, in general, the  
 “ lot of THE GREAT to possess a great deal by  
 “ their birth, to desire much more than they  
 “ possess, and to enjoy nothing : in consequence  
 “ of this disposition, they fly to places of public  
 “ resort in search of each other ; they meet  
 “ without feeling the smallest pleasure, and mix  
 “ among the group without being observed.”—  
 “ What is it then that re-unites them ?”—asked  
 I.—“ It is their rank,” she replied, “ and after-  
 “ wards custom, lassitude, and the continual  
 “ desire of dissipation ; a desire inseparably at-  
 “ tached to persons of our condition.”

Since it is really possible to experience disgust and languor in the assemblies and other entertainments of THE GREAT, let us examine if Solitude may not have a useful influence on the minds of even this class of persons.

Misled by false information, THE NOBILITY maintain, that all the pleasures of Solitude center in a contempt of the world and hatred of mankind, or, what is still worse, that misanthropy is the only basis on which they are founded. On the contrary, I am perfectly satisfied, that their



minds feel much more spleen and mortification on their return from a public assembly, than they possessed when they quitted home—to see the world. In solitude there can be no contention ; on the contrary, how many MEN are there who, frequenting public places with the vain hope of enjoying a transient pleasure, find all their addresses refused, and only experience accumulated pain ! The sober voice of reason is there but faintly heard ; while the light unmeaning tongue of folly is listened to with delight ; our intellectual communications afford no relish ; no reciprocity of sentiment prevails ; the appearance of satisfaction frequently excites envy, and a serenity of mind is misconstrued into sadness. The respective members of a numerous assembly are in general actuated by such different and opposite interests, that it is impossible to reconcile them with each other.—Ask that young and lovely girl, if in a public assembly she always experienced the pleasures which she hoped to find ? Ask her if her heart is not tortured with vexation when the rich and youthful beau, unfascinated by her charms, pays his addresses to some rival beauty ? Ask this rival beauty, what pangs her bosom feels when she perceives herself supplanted by some happier fair ? and let this last acknowledge the kind of pleasure she receives, if her admirer pays the least attention even to the fair female whom her heart adores. Ask that sober matron whose bosom heretofore has felt these torments, if she is not furious almost when higher compliments are passed on the beauty of youth, than on the wisdom of age ?

An English gentleman whom I met in Germany said in a manner extremely picturesque,



“ There are women who are eternally jealous  
“ that you do not pay them sufficient respect,  
“ and who, in consequence, assume an arrogance  
“ which would be insupportable even in an em-  
“ press ; while she might, by complacent smiles,  
“ not only render every one about her pleased  
“ and happy, but obtain their admiration and  
“ applause. The false dignity of such characters  
“ ruffles their tempers like the quills upon the  
“ fretful porcupine, or the feathers of a turkey  
“ cock in wrath.”

The most dissipated man must surely view such characters with abhorrence and disgust ; and if he seriously reflects, how many there are who, careless of distinguishing between appearances and reality feel with equal indifference the love of truth and dread of falsehood ; how frequently the persons who compose what is styled GOOD COMPANY are, even in the judgment and opinion of their sincerest and most liberal admirers, dazzled by false brilliancy, and gratified by the most trifling information ; that they shun with terror, the advantages of reflection, tranquility, and Solitude ; that they prefer a life of incessant dissipation, and seldom consult their judgments or exercise their understandings ; that they rather expect to receive pleasure from others, than endeavour to find it within themselves ; conduct themselves by casual advice, rather than take the trouble of thinking for themselves ; that amidst the most favourable opportunities to observe and study the human character, they neither think nor speak but by the information of others ; that they guide themselves by the prejudices of their education, the pride of their rank, and the dictates of fashion ; that they blindly adopt and



defend the reigning opinion of the moment ; and revolve continually round the same circle of defective notions, false ideas, and obscure expressions ;—in reflecting on these errors, the most dissipated man must exclaim with one of the most virtuous and respectable sages of Germany, “ To  
“ be forced to frequent this *good company*, is to  
“ a thinking and judicious mind one of the greatest  
“ est torments of life : but when a wise man is  
“ obliged from indispenfible motives to endure  
“ this torment, he will learn by experience to  
“ feel in a still higher degree the inestimable value  
“ lue of a rational Solitude.”

Men of the world therefore, if they act with candour, and in the sincerity of their hearts examine the merits of these societies, will soon entertain the deepest contempt for this noisy and tumultuous scene of life, learn to prefer the calm delights of Solitude, and feel a happy inclination growing in the bosom to display in more laudable pursuits the strength and energy of the mind. In these frequent vicissitudes of life, in this succession of embarrassments, in this continual distraction of the mind, every intellectual power evaporates.

By this scrupulous attention to all the duties of politeness, running incessantly from door to door to gain information of every man's health, we may, indeed, pay the court of flattery to both high and low ; but we also thereby most shamefully sacrifice our lives. The passion for play not only consumes time, but enervates the spirits ; while the obligations of gallantry reduce the soul to the most abject state of servitude.

The other entertainments of the great and gay are of as little value as their conversations. The man on whom Heaven has only bestowed



the talent of dancing, will make but a poor figure in society. The courtier, whose conversation entirely consists of observations, that "this is contrary to the established etiquette—that is the newest fashion—these are the most elegant embroideries on silk, cloth, and velvet—in such a month there will be a *GALA*,"—is a creature still more pitiful. A man may without doubt recommend himself by such kind of information, by that affected interest with which he speaks of a thousand trifling concerns of life, by the approbation which he gives to every passion, the flattery with which he soothes every prejudice and encourages every folly; but he thereby narrows his mind, and destroys the faculty of considering and forming a just estimate of any important subject. Besides, the pleasures of high-life cannot be enjoyed without the concurrence of great numbers in the same object at the same time: but reading and meditation may be enjoyed at any time, and continued without the intervention of another person. It is true, indeed, that if a man of the world were only to think of this mode of life, he would be despised as a misanthrope, and be obliged every moment to listen to the recommendation of entering into the round of public pleasure, to effect his cure. But, on the contrary, the societies of the world, while they add some little refinement to the natural rudeness of human manners, tend to increase a misanthropic temper, by furnishing the mind with a variety of reasons to justify it. In short, the burthen of misanthropy is not greater in the mind of him who flies from the pleasures of the world, than in him who seeks them: the first character only feels a hatred of vice and folly;



while, on the contrary, the idle and dissipated man nates every person, who distinguishes himself either by the goodness of his heart or the superiority of his understanding; and by his endeavor to deride all who possess merit, discovers that he feels no hope of acquiring for himself either reputation or esteem.

The mind that seriously contemplates these truths, and many others which these will suggest, must feel the necessity of retiring occasionally from the world; at least of confining himself to the company of a few faithful friends, whose wit and talents, when compared with those of the generality of men, will be what A STOP-WATCH is when compared with AN HOUR-GLASS. By the one you may undoubtedly discover the course of time; but the other from the nice art and happy care with which it is formed, points out every second as it passes. He, therefore, who feels the least inclination to study either men or books, can derive pleasure only from the company and conversation of learned and enlightened minds; and if, unfortunately, in his course through life, he should not meet with agreeable characters of this description, the charms of Solitude will recompense his disappointment.

A very great character, the Younger PLINY, felt no satisfaction from any species of public entertainment, general festival, or national solemnity, because he had cultivated a taste for those pleasures which a contemplative mind affords. He wrote to one of his friends, "I have, for  
" some days past, read and written in the most  
" agreeable tranquility. You will ask, How  
" this could possibly happen in in the middle of



“ Rome? I will satisfy you: It was during the  
 “ celebration of the games of the Circus, from  
 “ the sight of which I do not feel the smallest  
 “ pleasure: to my mind they neither afford no-  
 “ velty nor variety; and consist of nothing  
 “ worth seeing more than once. It is, there-  
 “ fore, inconcievable to me, how so many mil-  
 “ lions of people can press with such childish  
 “ curiosity merely to see horses gallop, and  
 “ slaves seated on chariots. When I reflect on  
 “ the interest, anxiety, and avidity with which  
 “ men pursue fights so vain, frivolous, and rei-  
 “ terated, I feel a secret satisfaction in acknow-  
 “ ledging that to me they afford no amusement,  
 “ and that I enjoy a superior delight in conse-  
 “ crating to the study of the *belles lettres* that  
 “ time which they so miserably sacrifice to the  
 “ entertainments of the Circus.”

But if, from similar motives, A MAN OF THE  
 WORLD were to steal from the pleasures of *good*  
*company*, would he not by that means degrade  
 his character; Would he not in the recess of  
 Solitude forget the BON-TON, and, of course,  
 lose all those qualities which externally consti-  
 tute the sole difference between THE NOBLE-  
 MAN and his SLAVE?

The BON-TON, which consists entirely in a  
 facility of expression, in representing our ideas  
 in the most agreeable manner, prevails in every  
 country, and is possessed in general by all men  
 of sense and education, whatever their rank or  
 condition in life may be. The nobleman and  
 the clown, therefore, may alike acquire a know-  
 ledge of the BON-TON. The solitary character  
 may perhaps appear in society with manners, ra-  
 ther out of date; but a certain propriety of be-



behaviour will accompany him, which a man of true reflection will prefer, however foreign his style may be to the fashion of the world. He may perhaps venture to appear in company with a coat, the colour of which was in fashion the preceding year; perhaps in his modes of thinking and manner of behaviour something may be discernibly offensive to the eyes of a man of the world, who upon those important subjects follows invariably the reigning opinion of the day; but by his easy, open, honest air, by that natural politeness which good sense and virtue inspire, a man, although he be rather out of the fashion, will never displease a rational and refined observer, even in the brilliant circles of a court, when he is found to possess a decent demeanour and a mind stored with useful information. The most accomplished courtier, with all his studied manners and agreeable address, frequently discovers that he possesses few ideas, and that his mind has only been employed on low and trifling objects. Among men of dissipated minds, who consider grossness of conversation and audacity of manner as the only criterion of good sense and polished behaviour, a solitary man does not always meet with a favourable reception. The style and sentiments which best please such characters are impossible to be learned in Solitude; for he who most contributes to the amusement of men of the world, can seldom boast any other merit than that of attempting to ridicule every thing that is true, noble, great, and good; or any other success than proving himself to be a foolish character, without judgment, principle, or good manners.



IN what I have hitherto considered in this Chapter, no question has been raised of the internal and immediate advantages which Solitude confers upon the mind.

THE MIND, without doubt, gains considerable advantage by having been accustomed to Solitude during the earliest years of infancy, if instructed in a judicious use of time. The circumstance also, that even in small towns the mind may be impressed with a deep disgust of all those vices and irregularities which are common to such places, is by no means unimportant; for it is highly advantageous, that without lessening the respect which is justly due to the talents and virtues of men of quality, the mind should be taught to remark also their foibles and defects, in order to detach it from its fondness for the world, and connect it more closely in connection with itself; to make it feel how dearly its future happiness is interested in exciting every faculty to acquire those original, great, and useful ideas, which are so seldom circulated in what is called GOOD COMPANY.

But the first and most incontestible advantage which Solitude confers, is, that it accustoms the mind to think. The imagination becomes more lively, the memory more faithful, while the senses remain undistracted, and no external object disgusts the soul. Withdrawn from the fatiguing toils of the world, where a thousand adventitious objects, a thousand incoherent ideas dance incessantly before our eyes, SOLITUDE presents one single object only to our view, and we steal ourselves away from every thing but that on which the heart has fondly fixed its pur-



*Suit.* An author\*, whose works I could read with pleasure every hour of my life, says, "It is the power of attention which in a great measure distinguishes the wise and the great from the vulgar and trifling herd of men. The latter are accustomed to think, or rather to dream, without knowing the subject of their thoughts. In their unconnected roving, they pursue no end; they follow no track. Every thing floats loose and disjointed on the surface of their mind; like leaves scattered and blown about on the face of the waters."

The mind easily acquires the habit of thinking, when it is withdrawn from that variety of objects by which its attention is distracted; when it turns from the observation of external objects, and finds itself in a situation where the course of daily occurrences is no longer subject to continual change. IDLENESS, however, would soon destroy all the advantages which Solitude is capable of affording us; for idleness excites the most dangerous fermentation of the passions, and produces in the mind of a solitary man a croud of extravagant ideas and irregular desires. To lead the mind to think, it is necessary, therefore, to retire from the multitude, and to raise our thoughts above the mean consideration of sensual objects. The mind then easily recollects all that information with which it has been enriched by reading, observation, experience, or discourse; every reflection produces new ideas,

\* Dr. BLAIR, the author of the much admired Sermons, and of an excellent work intitled, "Lectures on Rhetoric and "Belles Lettres," printed in London, for the first time, in the year 1783; and indispensibly necessary to be studied by every person who wishes to speak and write with accuracy and elegance.



and bring the purest pleasures to the soul. We cast our eyes on the scenes we have passed, and think on what is yet to come, until the memory of the past and future die away in the actual enjoyment of the present moment: but to preserve the powers of reason, we must, even in Solitude, direct our attention actively towards some noble indirect end.

It might perhaps excite a smile, were I to assert, that Solitude is the only school in which we can study the characters of men; but it must be recollected, that, although materials are only to be amassed in *society*, it is *Solitude* alone we can convert them into use. The world is the great scene of our observations; but to comment on and arrange them with propriety, is the work of Solitude. Under this view of the subject, therefore, I do not perceive how it is possible to call those characters envious and misanthropic, who, while they continue in the world, endeavour to discover even the hidden foibles, to expose all the latent faults and imperfections of mankind. A knowledge of the nature of man is laudable and necessary; and this knowledge can only be acquired by observation. I cannot therefore think, that this study is either so dangerous or illusory as is in general supposed; that it tends to degrade the species, to sink the human character by approbrium, to beget sooner or later sorrow and repentance, to deprive life of a variety of pure and noble pleasures, and in the end to destroy all the faculties of the soul. I only perceive a very laudable spirit of useful enquiry and instructive observation.

Do I feel either envy or hatred against mankind when I study the nature, and explore the



secret causes of those weaknesses and disorders which are incidental to the human frame; when I occasionally examine the subject with closer inspection, and point out for the general benefit of mankind, as well as for my own satisfaction, all the frail and imperfect parts in the anatomy of the body, and rejoice when I discover phænomena before unknown to others as well as to myself? I do not, upon these occasions, confine my knowledge to general observations, that such and such appearances were produced by such and such disorders; but, uninfluenced by any sinister considerations, I disclose, when the necessity of the case calls for information, all the knowledge I possess on the subject, and explain every symptom of the disorder, with all its changes and complications.

But a line of demarcation is drawn between the observations which we are permitted to make upon the anatomy of the human body, and those which we assume respecting the philosophy of the mind. The physician, it is said, studies the disorders of the body, to apply, if possible, a remedy, as occasion may require; but it is contended, that the moralist has a different end in view. How does this appear? A sensible and feeling mind must view the moral defect of his fellow-creatures with the same regret that he observes their physical infirmities. Why do moralists shun mankind? Why do they constantly retire from the corruptions of the world to the purity of Solitude, if it be not to avoid the contagion of vice? But there are a multiplicity of moral foibles and defects which are not perceived to be foibles or defects in those places where they are every hour indulged.



There is, without contradiction, a great pleasure in discovering the imperfections of human nature; and where that discovery may prove beneficial to mankind without doing an injury to any individual, to publish them to the world, to point out their properties, to place them by a luminous description before the eyes of men, is, in my apprehension, a pleasure so far from being mischievous, that I rather think, and I trust I shall continue to think so even in the hour of death, it is the only true mean of discovering the machinations of the devil; and destroying the effect of his works.

Solitude, therefore, is the school in which we must study the moral nature of man; in retirement, the principle of observation is awakened; the objects to which the attention will be most advantageously directed, are pointed out by mature reflection, and all our remarks guided by reason to their proper ends; while, on the contrary, courtiers, and men of the world, take up their sentiments from the caprices of others, and give their opinions without digesting the subject on which they are formed.

BONNET, in a very affecting passage of the Preface to his work on the Nature of THE SOUL, describes the advantages which, under the loss of his sight, he derived from Solitude.

“ Solitude naturally leads the mind to meditation: that in which I have in some measure  
“ hitherto lived, joined to the unfortunate circumstances which have for some years afflicted me, and from which I am not yet released, induced me to seek in the exercise of  
“ my mind those resources which my distracted state rendered so necessary. My mind now



“affords me a happy retreat, where I taste all the pleasures which have charmed my affliction.” At this period, the virtuous BONNET was almost blind.

An excellent man, of another description, who devoted his time to the instruction of youth, PFEFFEL, at *Colmar*, supported himself under the affliction of a total blindness in a manner equally noble and affecting, by a life less solitary indeed, but by the opportunities of frequent leisure which he devoted to the study of philosophy, the recreation poetry, and the exercise of humanity.

In Japan there was formerly an academy of blind persons, who perhaps were much more capable of discernment than the members of some other academies. These sightless academicians consecrated their hours to the history of their country, to poetry, and to music; and the most celebrated traits in the annals of Japan were chosen as the subjects of their muse, which they afterwards adapted to music. In reflecting upon the irregular lives and useless employments which a great number of solitary persons lead, we contemplate the conduct of these blind Japanese with the highest pleasure. The “mind’s eye” opened to compensate their unhappy fate in being deprived of the enjoyments of their corporeal organ. Light, life, and joy issued from the shades of surrounding darkness, and blessed them with tranquil reflection and salutary employments.

Let us then devote our lives to Solitude and freedom; let us frequently resign ourselves to the same happy tranquility which prevails in the English garden of my immortal friend M.



HINUBER, at *Marienwerder*, where every object solicits the mind to the enjoyment of pious, peaceful sentiment, and inspires it with the most elevated conceptions: or, if disposed profoundly to examine the most awful beauties of nature, and thereby prevent the soul from sinking, through the void which society has occasioned, let us roam beneath the antique pines of the towering and majestic HAPSBURGH.\*

Solitude induces the mind to think; and thought is the first spring of human actions: for it is truly observed, that the actions of men are nothing more than their thoughts brought into substance and being. The mind, therefore, has only to examine with honest impartiality the ideas which it feels the greatest inclination to follow, in order to dive into and unravel the whole mystery of the human character; and he who has not before been accustomed to interrogate himself will, upon such an enquiry, often discover truths the most important to his happiness, but which the disguises of the world had concealed from his view.

To a man disposed to activity, the only qualities for which he can have any occasion in Solitude are LIBERTY and LEISURE. The instant he finds himself alone, all the faculties of his soul are set in motion. Give him liberty and leisure, and he will soar incomparably higher than if he had continued to drag on a slavish and oppressed life among the sons of men. Authors who never think for themselves, who only endeavour to recollect the thoughts of others, and

\* An elevated mountain, from the summit of which may be seen the ruins of an ancient castle, from whence issued the celebrated house of Austria.



aim not at originality, here compile their works with easy labour, and are happy. But what superior pleasure does the mind of an author feel in the advantage of Solitude, where they contribute to bring forth the fruits of genius from the tree of virtue, notwithstanding such productions may perhaps irritate fools, and confound the wicked! The shades of Solitude, and an uninterrupted tranquillity, moderate the exuberance of a lively mind, brings its diverging rays of thought to a single point, and give it, wherever it is inclined to strike, a power which nothing can resist. A whole legion of adversaries cannot inspire the bosom of such a character with the smallest fear; he is conscious of his superior powers, and his sole desire is, that, sooner or later, each of them should receive the justice that is due. He must undoubtedly feel the keenest regret and mortification in observing the dispensations of the world; where vice so frequently is raised to grandeur, hypocrisy so generally honoured by the suffrages of a misguided populace, and where the dictates of powerful prejudice are obeyed in preference to the voice of truth. Casting, however, his eyes upon this scene, he will sometimes say, "This is as it ought to be;" but, "this is not to be endured:" and by a happy stroke of satire from his pen, the bloom of vice shall wither, the arts of hypocrisy be overthrown, and prejudice extinguished.

To the eye of the bold satirist, to the mind of the profound philosopher, and the feelings of the man of genius, the charms of TRUTH disclose themselves with superior lustre in the bowers of Solitude. A great and good man, Dr.



BLAIR of Edinburgh, says, “ The great and  
“ the worthy, the pious and the virtuous, have  
“ ever been addicted to serious retirement. It  
“ is the characteristic of little and frivolous  
“ minds to be wholly occupied with the vulgar  
“ objects of life. These fill up their desires,  
“ and supply all the entertainment which their  
“ coarse apprehensions can relish. But a more  
“ refined and enlarged mind leaves the world  
“ behind it, feels a call for higher pleasures, and  
“ seeks them in retreat. The man of public  
“ spirit has recourse to it, in order to form plans  
“ for general good ; the man of genius, in order  
“ to dwell on his favourite themes ; the philoso-  
“ pher, to pursue his discoveries ; the saint, to  
“ improve himself in grace.”

NUMA, the legislator of Rome, while he was only a private Sabine, retired, on the death of TATIA, his beloved wife, into the forest of *Aricia*, where he passed his time in wandering about alone in the sacred groves and lawns, in the most retired and solitary places. Hence a report arose, that it was not from any inward sorrow or melancholy disposition that he avoided human conversation, but from his being admitted, in these retreats, to a society more venerable and excellent : the goddess Egeria ! it was said, had become enamoured of his charms, had married him, and, by enlightening his mind, and storing it with superior wisdom, had led him to divine felicity. THE DRUIDS, also, who constantly inhabited caverns, rocks, and the most solitary woods, were said to have instructed the nobility of their nation in wisdom and eloquence, in all the various phænomena of nature, the course of the stars, the mysteries of religion,



and the effences of eternity. The high idea entertained of the wisdom of THE DRUIDS, although, like the story of NUMA, it is only an agreeable fiction, still shews with what enthusiasm every age and nation have spoken of those venerable characters, who, in the silence of woods and the tranquility of Solitude, have devoted their time to the study of wisdom.

It is in Solitude alone that genius is excited by its own internal powers, unsupported by THE GREAT, without the expectation of encouragement, without even a prospect of the most trifling recompence. CORREGIO, at a time when FLANDERS, torn by civil discord, was filled with painters as indigent in wealth as they were rich in fame, had been so poorly rewarded during his life, that a payment of six pistoles of German coin, which he was obliged to travel to PARMA to receive, created in his mind such an extravagance of joy as to prove the occasion of his death.\* The secret approbation which judgment will ever pay to the works of these divine artists, is the only recompence they expect for their merit: they paint in hope of being rewarded by immortal fame.

The practice of profound meditation in solitary places frequently raises the mind above its natural tone, warms the imagination, and gives birth to sentiments of the highest sublimity. The soul feels the most unpure, unbroken, perma-

\* The payment was made to him in *quadrina*, a species of copper coin. The joy which the mind of CORREGIO felt in being the bearer of so large a quantity of money to his wife, prevented him from thinking either of the length of his journey or the excessive heat of the day. He walked twelve miles; and his haste to reach his home brought on the pleurisy of which he died.



nent, and genial pleasures of which it is capable. In Solitude, to live and to think are synonymous; on every emotion the mind darts into infinity; and, wrapt in enthusiasm, is confirmed by this freedom of enjoyment in the habitude of thinking on sublime subjects, and of adopting the most heroic pursuits. In a deep Solitude, at the foot of a high mountain near PYRMONT, one of the most remarkable achievements of the present age was first conceived. The King of Prussia having visited the Spa at PYRMONT, to drink the waters, withdrew from the company who frequented the place, and wandered alone upon this beautiful mountain, which was then uncultivated, and which to this day is called THE ROYAL MOUNTAIN.\* It was on this desert, since become the seat of coquetry and dissipation, that the young monarch, as it is confidently reported, formed his project of the first war against SILESIA.

The inestimable value of time, of which the indolent, having no conception, can form no estimate, is much better learned in the regularity of Solitude, than in the light and airy rounds of life. He who employs himself with ardour, and is unwilling to live entirely in vain, contemplates with trembling apprehension the rapid movement of a stop-watch; the true image of human life, the most striking emblem of the rapid course of time.

The time which we employ in social intercourse, when it improves the faculties of the mind, raises the feelings of the heart to a certain degree of elevation, extends the sphere of knowledge, and banishes our cares, is far from being mis-spent. But if an intercourse even thus happily

\* Königsberg.



formed, become our sole delight, and change into the passion of love ; if it transform hours into minutes, and exclude from the mind every idea except those which the object of affection inspires, even LOVE itself, alas ! will absorb our time, and years will pass unperceived away.

Time is never too long ; on the contrary, it appears too short to him who, to the extent of his capacity, employs it usefully, in the discharge of the respective duties which his particular situation calls upon him to perform. To such a disposition time, instead of being burthensome, flies too hastily away. I am acquainted with a young prince, who, by the assistance of six domestics, does not employ more than two minutes in dressing. Of his carriage, it would be incorrect to say that he goes in it, for he flies. At his hospitable table, every course is finished in a moment ; and I am informed, that this is the usual fashion of princes ; who seem disposed to make every thing pass with rapidity. I have however, seen the royal youth to whom I allude, exercise the most brilliant talents, support the highest stile of character, attend in his own person to every application, and I know that he has afforded satisfaction and delight in every interview. I know that the affairs of his domestic establishment engage his most scrupulous attention six hours every day ; and that in every day of the year he employs, without exception, seven hours in reading the best English, Italian, French, and German authors. This prince knows the value of time.

The time which the man of the world throws away is treasured up by the man of Solitude, and indeed by every one who wishes to make his existence useful to himself or beneficial to man-



kind ; and certainly there is not in this world any species of enjoyment more permanent. Men have many duties to perform ; and, therefore, he who wishes to discharge them honourably, will vigilantly seize the earliest opportunity, if he does not wish that any part of his time, like a useless page, should be torn from the book of life. We stop the course of time by employment ; we prolong the duration of life by thought, by wise counsel, and useful actions. Existence, to him who wishes not to live in vain, is *to think*, and *to act*. Our ideas never flow more rapidly, more copiously, or with more gaiety, than in those moments which we save from an unpleasant and fashionable visit.

We shall always employ time with more rigid œconomy, when we reflect on the many hours which escape contrary to our inclination. A celebrated English author says, “ When we have  
“ deducted all that is absorbed in sleep, all that  
“ is inevitably appropriated to the demands of  
“ nature, or irresistably engrossed by the tyranny  
“ of custom ; all that passes in regulating the  
“ superficial decorations of life, or is given up  
“ in the reciprocations of civility to the disposal  
“ of others ; all that is torn from us by the vio-  
“ lence of disease, or stole imperceptibly away  
“ by lassitude and languor ; we shall find that part  
“ of our duration very small of which we can  
“ truly call ourselves masters, or which we can  
“ spend wholly at our own choice. Many of  
“ our hours are lost, in a rotation of petty cares,  
“ in a constant recurrence of the same employ-  
“ ments ; many of our provisions for ease or hap-  
“ piness are always exhausted by the present  
“ day ; and a great part of our existence serves



"no other purpose than that of enabling us to  
 "enjoy the rest."

Time is never more mis-spent than while we vent complaints against the want of it. All our actions are then tinged by peevishness. The yoke of life most certainly feels less oppressive when we carry it with good humour. But when the imperious voice of Fashion commands, we must, without a murmur, boldly resist her bondage, and learn to reduce the number of ceremonious visits which employ the week. The accomplishment of this victory, a door well bolted against those frequent visitors whose talk conveys no meaning to our minds, our mornings passed in rational employments, and the evening kept sacred to the severest scrutiny into our daily conduct, will at least double the time we have to live. MELANCTHON, when any visitor was announced, noted down not only the hour, but the very minute of his arrival and departure, in order that the day might not slip unheededly away.

The sorrowful lamentations on the subject of time mis-spent and business neglected, no longer recur to torture the mind, when under the freedom of a retired and rural life, we have once learnt to use the passing hours with œconomy. We have then no more fatiguing visits to make; we are no longer forced, in spite of our aversion, to accept of invitations; we are no longer mortified by the affluence of rival strangers: we are released from those innumerable duties which the manners of the world exact, and which altogether are not equal to a single virtue; importunate visitors cannot then call and steal away those hours which we hope to employ more usefully.



But it has also been observed with great truth, that very few of the hours which we pass in Solitude are distinguished by any useful or permanent effect; that many of them pass lightly away in dreams and chimeras, or are employed in discontented unquiet reflections, on the indulgence of dangerous passions, or of irregular and criminal desires.

To retire into Solitude is not always a proof that the mind is devoted to serious thought, or that it has relinquished the amusement of low and trifling pursuits. Solitude, indeed, may prove more dangerous than all the dissipations of the world. How frequently, in a moment of the happiest leisure, does indisposition render the mind incapable of study, or of employing its powers to any useful end! The most sorrowful condition of Solitude is that of the hypochondriac, whose mind is only occupied by reflecting on his pains. The most dissipated man does not more mis-spend his time in pursuing the fleeting pleasures of the world, than a melancholy pining mind, even when at the greatest distance, and under the most absolute separation from the rest of mankind. Peevishness and ill-humour occasion as great loss of time as melancholy, and are certainly the greatest obstacles to the attainment of mental felicity. Melancholy is an enemy whose hostilities alarm our fears, and we therefore endeavor to resist its attack; but peevishness and ill-humour take us by surprise, and we become the victims of their power even before we think ourselves in danger.

Let us, however, only reflect, that by peevishness and ill humour we not only lose a single day, but weeks and months together, and we



shall endeavour to escape from their influence, or, at least, to prevent their access. One unpleasant thought, if we uselessly suffer it to disquiet and torment our minds, will deprive us, for a length of time, of the capacity to perform any thing beyond the circle of our daily occupations. We should therefore, most anxiously endeavour to prevent any of the untoward accidents of life from gaining too great an influence over the activity of our minds. While the attention is employed, the remembrance of sorrow dies away. Thus, while the mind is engaged in literary composition, if the ideas flow with activity and success, peevishness and ill-humour disappear in a moment; and we frequently observe the pen taken up with the frown of discontent, and quit- ted with the smile of happiness and the face of joy.

Life would afford abundant leisure amidst the greatest multiplicity of affairs, did we not only suffer time to pass uselessly away, but even waste it of our own accord. He who in his earliest youth has learned the art of devoting every hour to the attainment of some useful end, has already made considerable advances, and is qualified to manage very extensive concerns. But, whether it proceeds from ill-humour or want of activity, we are always inclined, before we undertake the task we intend to perform, to indulge our ease, to make conditions, to persuade ourselves that it is not yet proper time to commence the work. Indolence must ever be caressed, before it can be induced to act. Let our first care, therefore, be to fix our minds invariably upon some object; and to pursue it in such a manner as to place attainment beyond



the reach of accident. Firmness and decision, as well as good nature and flexibility, must be joined to form the character of a man of business. Surely no man ever knew better how to employ life than that monarch of whom it was said, "He is like marble, equally firm and polished."

The pursuit of some particular object is the best preventive against the loss of time, and a sort of counter-poison to the languors of life. Every man, from the monarch on the throne to the labourer in the cottage, should have a daily task; and that which it is his daily duty to perform, should be done without procrastination or delay. Every thought and every action of man, therefore, ought to be directed towards the legend where it is written, "It is to do this that you are placed here." The great monarch who is an example to the age in which he lives, and whose conduct will become a model to future kings, rises every morning in summer at four o'clock, and in winter at five. The petitions of his subjects, the dispatches from foreign powers, the public documents of the state, which were presented the preceding evening, or have arrived during the night, are placed before him on a table. He opens and peruses the contents of every paper; and then distributes them into three heaps. One, which requires dispatch, he answers immediately; the other he prepares, by remarks written in the margin with his own hand, for the ministers and other officers of the crown; the third, which contains neither amusement nor business, he throws into the fire. The secretaries of state, who attend in readiness, afterwards enter to receive his Majesty's commands;



and the business of the day is delivered by the monarch into the hands of his servants, to be performed without delay. He then mounts his horse to review his troops, and receives in the field those foreigners who are desirous of being introduced to him. This scene is succeeded by the hospitality of his table, to which he sits down with gaiety and presence of mind, and enlivens the conversation with sentiments and apothegms which strike the mind by their truth and wisdom. The secretaries re-enter when the repast is finished, bringing with them, properly and neatly prepared for the royal approbation, those documents of which they had received the rough draughts in the morning. Between the hours of four and five in the afternoon, the daily business of the nation being concluded; the monarch thinks himself at liberty to repose; and this indulgence consists in reading to himself; or having read to him, the best compositions, ancient or modern, until the hour of supper arrives. A sovereign who thus employs his hours, may fairly expect that the time of his ministers, his generals, his officers of state, shall not be mis-spent.

Many men will never exert themselves except in matters of high importance; never employ their talents but upon great objects; and because they lose this opportunity, will do nothing. Others do nothing, because they do not know how to distribute their time. They might be able to perform some great and useful action, if they would only seize all the idle half-hours, and employ them to the attainment of any end they might propose; for there are many important events which can only be produced by



flow degrees. But those who are not only subject to, but are pleased with and solicit continual interruption; who wait for the return of good-humour, and remain idle until they feel an inclination to be industrious, which can only be acquired by habit; who look prospectively for that season of complete leisure which no man ever finds; will soon fallaciously conclude, that they have neither opportunity nor power to exert their talents; and to kill that time which adds a burthen to their lives, will saunter about, and ride from place to place morning, noon, and night.

One of the greatest and most worthy men that ever adorned SWISSERLAND, my deceased friend ISELIN, composed his *Ephemerides* during the debates in the Senate of BASIL\*; a work which all the nobility of Germany ought to study, and many of them have read. Our own celebrated MAESER, who now resides at *Osnaburg*, is equally honoured and beloved by his kings, the prince, and all our ministers, as a man of business and a true patriot, and in *Osnaburg* by the nobility, clergy, citizens, and peasants, raised himself, by the easy exercise of sportive fancy to a pinnacle of fame which few German writers have been able to reach†.

\* Mr ISELIN was a Register: while he was composing his *Ephemerides*, the Senators of *Basil* conceived that he was registering their debates, in the same manner as the Counsellors of *Zurich* thought that the immortal GESSNER was collecting their proceedings upon his tablets, while he was in fact taking the portraits of those worthies in caricature.

† M. MAESER dictated to his daughter during the exhibitions of the theatre almost the whole of his fugitive pieces, which have so justly given immortality to his name.



“*Carpe diem*”, says HORACE; and this commendation will extend with equal propriety to every *hour* of our lives. The voluptuous of every description, the votaries of *Bacchus*, and the sons of *Anacreon*, exhort us to drive away corroding care, to promote incessant gaiety, to enjoy the fleeting moments as they pass; and there is sound reason in these precepts, though not in the sense in which they understand them. To enjoy the present moments, they must not be consumed in drinking and debauchery, but employed in advancing steadily towards that end we have proposed to attain. We may be solitary even amidst the joys of public life. Morning visits may be paid at noon, cards of ceremony may be circulated through half the town, personal appearances may be recorded in every fashionable assembly, and the morning and the evening still kept sacred to ourselves. It is only necessary to adopt some regular plan of life, to encourage a fondness for home, and an inclination to continue the pursuit of our design. It is the man of labour and application alone who has, during the day, afforded benefit to his neighbour, or service to the state, that can, in conscience, fix himself a whole night to the gaming-table, without hearing or saying one interesting word, and without, on his return home, being able to recollect any other expression than “I have won” or lost so much money.”

The highest advantage which we derive from time, and the sole end to which I would direct these reflections, PETRARCH has already taught us. “If,” says PETRARCH, “you feel any inclination to serve God, in which consist the



“ highest felicities of our nature ; if you are  
“ disposed to elevate the mind by the study of  
“ letters, which, next to religion, procures us  
“ the truest pleasures ; if, by your sentiments  
“ and writings, you are anxious to leave behind  
“ you something that will memorise your names  
“ with posterity, stop the rapid progress of your  
“ days, and prolong the course of this most un-  
“ certain life ; if you feel the least inclination  
“ to acquire these advantages, fly, ah ! fly, I  
“ beseech you, from the enjoyments of the  
“ world, and pass the few remaining days you  
“ have to live in Solitude.”

It is not in the power of every man to follow this advice ; but there are many who are, in a greater or less degree, masters of their time, and who may, as their inclinations lead them, either preserve or relinquish their connections with the world. It is, therefore, for the benefit of such characters that I shall continue to consider the advantages which Solitude affords.

Solitude inspires the mind with exquisite taste, extends the boundaries of thought, enlarges the sphere of action, and dispenses a superior kind of pleasure, which neither time nor accident can remove.

Taste is refined in solitude by a more careful selection of those beauties which become the subjects of our contemplation. It depends entirely upon ourselves to make choice of those objects from which we may derive the purest pleasure ; to read those writings, to encourage those reflections which most tend to purify the mind, and store it with the richest variety of images. Reposing with security upon the established wisdom of others rather than upon our own judgment,



the mind escapes the contagion of those false notions which are so easily adopted by the world. To be obliged continually to tell oneself, "This" is the sentiment which you must entertain," is insupportable. Why, alas! will not men strive, by free choice and reflection, according to the nature of the subject, to gain opinions of their own, rather than submit to be guided by the arbitrary dictates of others? Of what importance is it to me, that the *beau-monde* approves of a writing that pleases me? In what do you instruct me, ye cold and miserable critics? Does your judgment make me feel that which is truly fine, noble, good, and excellent, with higher relish? How can I submit to the decision of that partial tribunal which decides upon the merit of works by arbitrary agreements, examines all irregularly, and generally determines wrong? What opinion must I entertain of the multitude, who only repeat what you direct them to say, and who speak your sentiments through the channel of the public? What reliance can be placed in the rectitude of your judgments, when, in reviewing the most detestable publications, you can pronounce that the whole is excellent, because a certain person of literary renown, upon whose word you would condemn the chastest work, has thought proper to praise it?

It is impossible ever to discover or see the enchanting beauties of truth, unless we entirely relinquish the society of this class of readers; for they infect the judgment before we suspect them. But enlightened minds, whose correct taste immediately distinguishes beauties from defects; who become enthusiastic and impassioned admirers of all that is excellent, while they



feel a natural disgust at that which is bad ; who enjoy the works of true genius, and suffer the severest pain from dullness, absurdity, and bombast, willingly retire from the crowd, and alone, or with a few chosen friends, resign themselves to the pleasure of a tranquil intercourse with all that antiquity or modern ages have produced of distinguished excellence.

It is then we learn how much we are capable of contributing to the perfection and happiness of our nature, and experience the most agreeable sensations of our existence ; it is then that we congratulate ourselves on the possession of our mental powers in the subjects on which they are employed ; it is then we feel, that with such characters we exert our faculties to the advantage of ourselves, to the pleasure of our friends, and perhaps also, at some future period, to the happiness of sympathetic minds, to whom we are yet unknown, and to whom, indeed, the pen of truth can never be displeasing.

Solitude gives new vigour to activity of the mind, multiplies the number of its ideas, and extends its sources of information by rendering our curiosity more lively, our application more indefatigable, our perseverance more firm.

A man who was well acquainted with all these advantages, has said, that “ by silent solitary  
“ reflection, we exercise and strengthen all the  
“ powers of the mind : the many obscurities  
“ which render it difficult to pursue our path,  
“ disperse and retire, and we return to a busy  
“ social life with more cheerfulness and content. The sphere of our understanding becomes enlarged by reflection ; we have learned to survey more objects, and to bind them



“ intellectually together ; we carry a clearer  
 “ sight, a juster judgment, and firmer princi-  
 “ ples, with us into the world in which we are  
 “ to live and act ; and are then more able, even  
 “ in the midst of all its distractions, to preserve  
 “ our attention, to think with accuracy, to de-  
 “ termine with judgment, in a degree, propor-  
 “ tioned to the preparations we have made in  
 “ the hour of retirement.

The curiosity of a rational mind is, in the ordinary transactions of the world, very soon satisfied ; but in Solitude it augments daily. The human mind, in its researches after truth, cannot immediately discover the end it wishes to attain : it links proof to observation, joins experience to conclusion, and by one truth develops another. The astronomers who first observed the course of the planets, did not foresee the extensive influence which their discoveries would one day produce upon the happiness and interests of mankind. Delighted to view the state of the firmament during the progress of the night, and perceiving that the stars changed their situations, their curiosity induced them to explore the causes of that which excited their admiration, and determined them to pursue the road of science. It is thus, by silent activity, that the soul augments its powers ; and a contemplative mind will always gain advantage in proportion as it reflects upon the immediate causes, the effects, and the possible consequences, of an established truth.

The mind, when the imagination is regulated by the level of reason, proceeds with much less rapidity ; but it never takes the same steps afterwards that it did before. Men who permit



themselves to be drawn aside by the charms of fancy, construct worlds, which immediately burst like airy bubbles of soap and water; while rational minds examine the materials of their projected fabric, and use those only which are good. "The great art to learn much," says LOCKE, "is to undertake a little at a time."

Dr. JOHNSON, the celebrated English writer, has very happily said, "All the performances  
" of human art, at which we look with praise  
" or wonder, are instances of the resistless force  
" of perseverance; it is by this, that the quarry  
" becomes a pyramid, and that distant coun-  
" tries are united by canals. If a man was to  
" compare the effect of a single stroke of the  
" pick-axe, or of one impression of a spade,  
" with the general design and last result, he  
" would be overwhelmed by the sense of their  
" disproportion; yet those petty operations,  
" incessantly continued, in time surmount the  
" greatest difficulties; and mountains are levell-  
" ed, and oceans bounded, by the slender force  
" of human beings. It is therefore of the ut-  
" most importance that those who have any in-  
" tention of deviating from the beaten roads of  
" life, and acquiring a reputation superior to  
" names hourly swept away by time among the  
" refuse of fame, should add to their reason, and  
" their spirit, the power of persisting in their  
" purposes; acquire the sapping what they can-  
" not batter; and the habit of vanquishing obsti-  
" nate resistance by obstinate attacks."

Activity animates the most savage desert, converts the dreary cell into a lively world, gives immortal glory to the genius who meditates in the silence of retirement, and crowns the inge-



nious artist who produces his *chef-d'œuvres* from a solitary work-shop with unfading fame. The mind, in proportion to the difficulties it meets with, and the resistance it has to surmount, exercises its powers with higher pleasure, and raises its efforts with greater zeal, to attain success. APOLLO being reproached with the small number of pictures he had painted, and the incessant attention with which he re-touched his works, contented himself with making this reply: "*I paint for posterity.*"

To recommend monastic notions of Solitude, and the sterile tranquility of the cloister, to men who, after a serious preparation in retirement, and an assiduous intercourse with their own minds, are capable of performing great and good actions in the world, would be extravagant and absurd. Princes cannot live the life of monks; ministers of state are no longer sought in the silence of the convent; generals are no longer chosen from the members of the church. PETRARCH therefore aptly says, "I condemn the Solitude which encourages sloth, and the leisure which is idly and unprofitably employed: Solitude must be rendered useful to many purposes of life. A man who is indolent, slothful, and detached from the world, must inevitably become melancholy and miserable. Such a character can never do any good; he cannot resign himself to any useful science, or pursue any object worthy the attention of a great man."

He may, however, procure to himself the pleasures of the mind; those precious pleasures, so easily acquired, so open to the access of all mankind: for it is only in those pleasures which



are sold for money, wherein the mind has no participation, and which only tend to afford a momentary relief to languor, or to drown the senses in forgetfulness, that THE GREAT claim an exclusive right; but in those delights which the mind is capable of procuring for its peculiar enjoyment, they have no privilege; delights, which are reared by our own industry, by serious reflection, profound thought, deep research, and which produce the more hidden fruits of knowledge, the love of truth, and a contemplation of the perfection of our moral and physical nature.

A preacher from SWISSERLAND has in a *German* pulpit said, "The streams of mental pleasures, those which, of course, all men of whatever condition may equally partake, flow from one to the other: the stream of which we have most frequently tasted, loses neither its flavour nor its virtue, but frequently acquires new charms, and conveys additional pleasure the oftener it is tasted. The subjects of these pleasures are as unbounded as the reign of truth, as extensive as the world, as unlimited as the divine perfection. The incorporeal pleasures, therefore, are much more durable than all others. They neither disappear with the light of the day, nor change with the external forms of things, nor descend with our bodies to the tomb; but continue while we exist: accompany us under all the vicissitudes, not only of our mortal life, but of that which is to come; secure us in the darkness of the night; and compensate for all the miseries we are doomed to suffer."



Men of exalted minds therefore have always, amidst the bustle of the gay world, and even in the brilliant career of heroism, preserved a taste for mental pleasures. Engaged in affairs of the most important consequence, notwithstanding the variety of objects by which their attention was distracted, they were still faithful to THE MUSES, and fondly devoted their minds to the perusal of the works of genius. They gave no credit to the idea, that reading and knowledge are useless to great men; and frequently condescended, without a blush, to become writers themselves. When PHILIP king of *Macedon* invited DIONYSIUS the Younger to dine with him at *Corinth*, he felt an inclination to deride the father of his royal guest, because he had blended the characters of sovereign and poet, and had employed his leisure in writing odes and tragedies. "How could the king find leisure," said PHILIP, "to write these trifles?"—"In those hours," answered Dionysius, "which you and I spend in drunkenness and debauchery."

ALEXANDER was remarkably fond of reading. Whilst he was filling the world with the fame of his victories, marking his progress by blood and slaughter, dragging captive monarchs at his chariot wheels, marching over smoking towns and ravaged provinces, and led on with increasing ardour to new victories, he felt many intervals of time hang heavy on his hands, and lamented that *Asia* afforded him no books to amuse his leisure. He wrote therefore to HARPALUS, to send him the works of *Philistus* the tragedies of *Euripides*, *Sophocles*, *Eschylus*, and the dithyrambics of *Thalestes*.



BRUTUS, the avenger of the violated liberty of ROME, while serving in the army under POMPEY, employed among books all the moments he could spare from the duties of his station. The hours which were allotted to the repose of the army, he devoted to reading and writing; and he was even thus employed in the evening preceding the battle of PHARSALIA; the celebrated battle by which the empire of the universe was decided. The army was encamped in a marshy plain; it was the middle of summer, and the heat of the season excessive. The servants who bore the tent of Brutus did not arrive until a late hour. Being much fatigued, he bathed, and towards noon caused his body to be rubbed with oil, while he waited their arrival. Taking some little refreshment, he retired to his tent, and while others were locked in the arms of sleep, or contemplating the probable event of the ensuing day, he employed himself, during the night, in drawing a plan from the History of *Polybius*.

CICERO, who was more sensible of mental pleasures than any other character, says in his oration for the poet *Archias*. Why should I  
“ be ashamed to acknowledge pleasures like  
“ these, since, for so many years, the enjoy-  
“ ment of them has never prevented me from  
“ relieving the wants of others, or deprived me  
“ of the courage to attack vice and defend  
“ virtue? Who can justly blame, who can  
“ censure me if, while others are pursuing the  
“ views of interest, gazing at festal shows and  
“ idle ceremonies, exploring new pleasures, en-  
“ gaged in midnight-revels, in the distraction  
“ of gaming, the madness of intemperance, nei-



“ther reposing the body, nor recreating the  
 “mind, I spend the recollective hours in a pleas-  
 “ing review of my past life, in dedicating my  
 “time to learning and the muses.”

PLINY the Elder, full of the same spirit, devoted every moment of his life to learning. Some person always read to him during his meals; and he never travelled without a book and portable riding-desk by his side. He made extracts from every work he read; and, scarcely conceiving himself alone while his faculties were absorbed in sleep, he endeavoured by this diligence to double the duration of his existence.

PLINY the Younger read wherever it was possible, whether riding, walking, sitting, or whenever the subject of his employment afforded him the opportunity; for he made it, indeed, an invariable rule to prefer the discharge of his duty to those occupations which he followed only as an amusement. It was this disposition which so strongly inclined him to Solitude and retirement. “Shall I never break,” said he, “the chains  
 “by which I am withheld? Are they indissoluble? No! I dare not hope for such an event!  
 “Every day adds new torments to the former.  
 “Scarcely is one duty performed, than another  
 “is imposed; and the chain of business becomes  
 “every day more heavy and oppressive.”

PETRARCH was always gloomy and low-spirited, except while he was reading or writing, especially when he was prevented from resigning himself in Solitude to the fine phrensies of poetry on the banks of some inspiring stream, among the romantic rocks and mountains, or the flower-enamelled vallies, of the Alps. To avoid the loss of time during his travels, he constantly



wrote at every inn where he stopped for refreshment. One of his friends, THE BISHOP OF CAVILLON, being alarmed, lest the intense application with which he read and wrote when at *Vaucluse*, should entirely destroy his health, which was already greatly impaired, desired him one day to give him the key of his library. PETRARCH gave it to him immediately, without suspecting the motive of his request; when the good bishop instantly locking up his books and writing-desk, said, "I interdict you from pen, ink, paper, and books, for the space of ten days." PETRARCH felt the severity of the sentence, but conquered the violence of his feelings, and obeyed. The first day appeared longer to him than a year; on the second he was afflicted with the head-ach from morning till night; and on the third, he was attacked by a fever. The bishop, affected by the condition to which he was reduced, returned him the key, and restored him to health.

The late EARL OF CHATHAM, as I have been informed by his own nephew, my intimate friend, was, in his youth, cornet in a regiment of dragoons, which was quartered in a small town in England. He discharged his duty, upon all occasions, with scrupulous attention; but the moment his duty was performed, he retired to Solitude during the remainder of the day, and employed his hours alone, without visiting or being visited, in reading the most celebrated authors of *Rome* and *Athens*. Attacked at an early period of his life by an hereditary gout, which he wished to eradicate, his mode of living was extremely frugal and abstemious. The feeble state of his health perhaps made him fond of retirement; but it was certainly in Solitude



that he laid the foundation of that glory which he afterwards acquired.

Characters like this, it will perhaps be said, are not now to be found; but, in my opinion, both the assertion and the idea would be erroneous. Was the EARL OF CHATHAM inferior in greatness to a Roman? and will HIS SON, who while yet a youth, thundered forth his eloquence in the senate like DEMOSTHENES, and, like PERICLES, captivated the hearts of all who heard him, who now, when little more than thirty years of age, makes himself feared and respected as the Prime Minister of the British empire, ever think or act, under any circumstances with less greatness than his illustrious father? What men have once been, they may always be. Europe now produces men as great as ever swayed the sceptre, or commanded the armies of Greece or Rome. Wisdom and virtue, where an inclination to attain them prevails, may encrease as much in public as in private life, as well in the palaces of kings as under the roof of the humble cottage. Wise Solitude is no where more respectable than in the palace. The statesman may there, in profound tranquility, plan the most important enterprizes, and live with calmness and content, provided he discharges his duty without ostentation, and avoids the contagion of weak and frivolous minds. Instruction may be acquired at all times, and in every place; and although it may be difficult to return from the path which a man has once trod, and commence a new career, he may wisely employ the remainder of his days, unless, while he has the power to display the steady light of truth, he contents himself with emitting the occasional twinkling of the glow-worm.



Solitude will ultimately render the mind superior to all the vicissitudes and miseries of life. The man to whose bosom neither riches, nor pleasure, nor grandeur, can convey felicity, may, with a book in his hand, learn to forget cares under the friendly shade of every tree. He tastes the pleasures which Solitude affords with exquisite delight; pleasures, lively and varied, pure and for ever new. At his desk, he feels his mind exert itself with fresh vigour; the exercise of his faculties then affords him the most pleasing sensation of his existence, and inspires an idea of the character which he may, in future, if he pleases, attain. If his views are great, and his inclinations pure, the pleasures of Solitude become proportionably great and good; he fears in a greater degree the pernicious poison of flattery, and rejects with higher disdain the pursuit of idle and frivolous amusements.

He who shuns the society of men in order to obtain their love and esteem, who rises with the sun to hold converse with the dead, is, without doubt, not booted at the break of day. The horses of such a man repose quietly in their stalls, and his doors remain carefully bolted against the intrusion of idle loungers. He studies, however, both men and manners; never loses sight of the transactions of the world; casts a retrospective eye upon the knowledge which his study and experience have gained; and every observation which he makes on life, confirms a truth or refutes a prejudice: for in Solitude, the whole system of life is unveiled, stripped of its false glare, and represented in its natural state to our view: truth, which in the common intercourse of men always lies concealed, here exhibits itself



in naked simplicity. Ah! how happy is that man who has attained to a situation where he is not under the necessity of disguising truth!

But these pleasures of Solitude are not incompatible with our duty to the public, since they are the noblest exercises in which we can employ our faculties for the good of mankind. Can it, in any situation, be a crime to honour, to adore, and sacredly to speak THE TRUTH? Can it be a crime boldly and publicly to announce, as the occasion may require, that which an ordinary individual would tremble to think of; and to prefer a generous freedom to a continual restraint? Is not the liberty of the press the channel through which writers diffuse the light of TRUTH among THE PEOPLE, and display its radiance to the eyes of THE GREAT? Good writers inspire the mind with courage to think; and is not the free communication of sentiment a cause of the progress and improvement of human reason? It is precisely this love of liberty which leads men into Solitude, that they may throw off the chains by which they are confined in the world; it is from this disposition to be free, that he who thinks, in Solitude boldly speaks a language which perhaps in society he would not have dared to hazard without precaution. Timidity never finds its way into Solitude. The man who has courage to retire under peaceful lonely shades, disdains to exercise a base submission to the pride and insolence of THE GREAT, and boldly tears from the face of despotism the mask by which it is concealed.

Solitude conveys the most sublime and lasting pleasures to the soul, unless the body which it inhabits be entirely decayed; pleasures which



inspire serenity in every situation of life, afford consolation under all its misfortunes, continue for ever unexhausted, and at length, become as necessary to our happiness, as it is to the debauched mind of a man of the world to be for ever trifling, inactive, or running from door to door in search of contemptible joys that are never to be found. CICERO, speaking of the pleasures of the mind, says, "They employ us in youth, and amuse us in old age; in prosperity they grace and embellish, in adversity they afford us shelter and support; delightful at home, and easy abroad, they soften slumber, shorten fatigue, and enliven retirement."—"The Belles Lettres," says PLINY the Younger, "are my delight and consolation. I know of no study more agreeable: there is no misfortune which they cannot alleviate. In the afflictions I feel for the sufferings of my wife, the sickness of my servants, the death of my friends, I find no relief but in my studies; for, although I am then made sensible of the magnitude of my evils, they nevertheless become more supportable."

Philosophy, a love of letters, all that affords pleasure or adds dignity to retirement, can only be learned in Solitude. Fine taste cannot be either cultivated or preserved among those vain pretenders, who, while you discourse with them upon subjects of science, speak of learning with contempt, and frequently tell you with a sneer, "Oh! I never enquire into such vulgar things."

The habit of thinking, of making new discoveries, of acquiring new ideas, is a never-failing resource to him who feels his mind enriched by observation, and knows how to apply the know-



legde which he gains. When DEMETRIUS had captured the city of *Megara*, the soldiers prepared to plunder it; the Athenians, however, interceding strongly for its inhabitants, prevailed: DEMETRIUS was satisfied with expelling the garrison, and declared the city free. Amidst these transactions, he recollected STILPO, a philosopher of great reputation, who sought only the retirement and tranquility of a studious life. Having sent for him, DEMETRIUS asked, "if they had taken any thing from him?"—"No," replied STILPO, "*I found none that wanted to steal any knowledge.*"

Solitude is the channel through which all those things flow which men conceal in the ordinary commerce of life. The wounded feelings of a man who is able and disposed to write, may, in Solitude, derive the greatest comforts from literary composition. The pen, indeed, is not always taken up because we are alone; but if we are inclined to write, it is indispensably necessary that we should enjoy undisturbed quietude. The mind disposed to cultivate philosophy, or to court the muse, must be free from all embarrassment. He must not hear his children crying every moment at his door, nor must his servants incessantly intrude with messages of ceremony and cards of compliment. In short, he must be alone. Whether walking in the open air or seated in his closet, reclined under the shade of a spreading tree or stretched upon his sofa, he must follow all the impulses of his mind, and be at liberty to change his situation when and where he pleases. To write with success, he must feel an irresistible inclination, and be able to obey the dictates of his taste and genius without impedi-



ment or restraint. Unless all these advantages be united, the progress of the work must be interrupted, and the efforts of the mind suspended, until it feels that divine inspiration which is capable of subduing every difficulty and surmounting every obstacle. An author can never write well, unless he feels a secret call within his breast, unless he watches for those propitious moments when the mind pours forth its ideas, and the heart warms with the subject. Revived by cheerful prospects, animated by the noblest sentiments, urged by contempt of difficulties, the mind will make a powerful effort, and fine thoughts, in suitable expressions, will flow spontaneously from his pen. The question, whether he ought or ought not to write, will then be resolved. The inclination is irresistible, and will be indulged, even at the expence of fortune, family, friends, patrons, and all that we possess.

PETRARCH felt this secret impulse when he tore himself from *Avignon*, the most vicious and corrupted city of his time, to which the Pope had transferred the papal chair. Although honoured with the protection of the Holy Father, of princes, and of cardinals; still young and full of noble ardour, he exiled himself from that brilliant court, and retired to the famous Solitude of *Vaucluse*, at the distance of six leagues from *Avignon*, where he had only one servant to attend him, and all his possessions consisted of a small house and little garden. Charmed with the natural beauty which surrounded his humble retreat, he removed his library to it; and, during his residence there, completed all his works, of which before he had only sketched the outlines. PETRARCH wrote more at *Vaucluse* than at any other place where



he resided ; but, although he was continually employed in polishing his writings, he hesitated long before he could resolve to make them public. VIRGIL calls the leisure which he enjoyed at *Naples* ignoble and obscure ; but it was during this leisure that he wrote his *GEORGICS*, the most perfect of all his works, and which shews in almost every line that he wrote for immortality.

Every great and excellent writer has this noble view, and looks with enthusiasm towards the suffrages of posterity. An inferior writer asks a more moderate recompence, and sometimes obtains the desired reward. Both, however, must withdraw from the distractions of the world, seek the silence of the forest, and the freshness of the shade, and retire as it were into their own minds. To produce a work capable of reaching future generations, or worthy of the attention of contemporary sages, the love of Solitude must entirely occupy the soul ; for, to the advantages resulting from Solitude, every thing they perform, all that they attain must be attributed. Every advantage a writer gains by profound thinking is due to Solitude ; he there reviews and arranges whatever in the world has made an impression on his mind, and sharpens the dart of satire against the inveteracy of prejudice and the obstinacy of opinion. The faults of mankind strike the moral writer, and the desire of correcting them agitates his soul as much as the desire of pleasing actuates that of others. The desire of immortality, however, is the last in which a writer ought to indulge. No one need attempt it, unless he possess the genius of a BACON ; can think with the acuteness of a VOLTAIRE ; compose with



the ease and elegance of a ROUSSEAU; and, like them, is able to produce master pieces worthy of being transmitted to posterity. Characters like these alone can say, "Our minds are animated by the sweet consolatory reflection, that our names will be remembered when we are no more; by the pleasing whisper of flattery which we hear from some of our contemporaries, of the approbation we shall hereafter receive from those who are yet unborn, to whose instruction and happiness we have, with all the ardour and esteem of love, devoted our labours. We feel within us those seeds of emulation, which incite us to rescue from death our better part, and which prevent the happiest moments of our lives from being buried in oblivion."

The love of fame, as well by the feeble light of the lamp as on the throne or in the field of battle produces actions, the memory of which is not extinguished by mortality, nor buried with us in the tomb. The meridian of life becomes then as brilliant as its morning. "The praises" says PLUTARCH, "bestowed upon great and exalted minds only spur on and rouse their emulation. Like a rapid torrent, the glory which they have already acquired hurries them irresistably on to every thing that is great and noble. They never consider themselves sufficiently rewarded. Their present actions are only a pledge of what may be expected from them, and they would blush not to live faithful to their glory, and to render it still more illustrious by the noblest actions."

The man to whose ear idle adulation and insipid compliment is disgusting, will feel his heart



warm when he hears with what enthusiasm CICEERO says, "Why should we dissemble what  
" it is impossible for us to conceal? Why should  
" we not be proud of confessing candidly that  
" we all aspire to fame? The love of praise in-  
" fluences all mankind, and the greatest minds  
" are most susceptible of it. The philosophers  
" who most preach up a contempt for fame,  
" prefix their names to their works; and the  
" very performances, in which they decry osten-  
" tation are evident proofs of their vanity and  
" love of praise. Virtue requires no other re-  
" ward for all the toils and dangers to which she  
" exposes herself, than that of fame and glory.  
" Take away this flattering reward, and what  
" would remain in the narrow career of life to  
" prompt her exertions? If the mind could not  
" launch into the prospect of futurity, were the  
" operations of the soul to be limited to the  
" space that bounds those of the body she would  
" not weaken herself by constant fatigues, nor  
" weary herself with continual watchings and  
" anxieties; she would not think even life itself  
" worthy of a struggle; but there lives in the  
" breast of every good man a certain principle  
" which unceasingly prompts and inspires him  
" to the pursuit of a fame beyond the present  
" hour; a fame not commensurate to our mor-  
" tal existence, but co-extensive with the latest  
" posterity. Can we, who every day expose  
" ourselves to dangers for our country, and have  
" never passed one moment of our lives without  
" anxiety and trouble, meanly think, that all  
" consciousness shall be buried with us in the  
" grave? If the greatest men have been careful  
" to preserve their bustoes and their statues, those



“ images not of their minds but of their bodies,  
“ ought we not rather to transmit to posterity  
“ the resemblance of our wisdom and virtue?  
“ For my part, at least, I acknowledge, that in  
“ all my actions I conceived that I was dissemi-  
“ nating and transmitting my fame to the remo-  
“ test corners and the latest ages of the world,  
“ Whether, therefore, my consciousness of this  
“ shall cease in the grave, or, as some have  
“ thought, shall survive as a property of the  
“ soul, is of little importance; for of one thing  
“ I am certain, that at this instance I feel from  
“ the reflection a flattering hope and delightful  
“ sensation.”

This is the true enthusiasm with which we ought to inspire the bosoms of the young nobility. Were any one happy enough to light up this generous flame within their hearts, and thereby inure them to a constant application to their studies, we should see them shun the pernicious pleasures of their age, and enter with dignity on the career of heroes; we might then expect them to perform the noblest actions, to add new lustre to science, and brighter rays to glory. To exalt the minds of noble youths, it is only necessary to inspire them with an aversion from every thing that is mean; to excite a disgust for every thing that enervates the body or weakens the faculties of the mind; to remove from their company those vile and contemptible flatterers who are continually descanting on the pleasures of sense, and who seek to acquire interest and fortune only by leading them into crimes; decrying every thing that is great, and rendering them suspicious of every thing that is good. The desire of extending our fame by noble deeds, and of increasing



our credit by internal dignity and greatness of soul, possesses advantages which neither high rank nor illustrious birth can bestow ; and which, even on the throne, cannot be acquired without the aid of virtue, and a fixed attention to the suffrages of posterity.

The seeds of future fame are in no instance more plentifully sown than by the bold satirist, who dares to condemn the follies of the multitude, to paint their prejudices, and expose their vices in glowing and unfading colours ; and whose writings, if they fail to reform the people of that age, may operate upon succeeding generations, extend their influence to their children's children, and perhaps render them more wise. Judicious precepts, great examples, merited glory, produce their effects, when the man of merit whom envy has pursued, has descended to his grave. O LAVATER ! those base corrupted souls who only shine a moment and are for ever extinguished, will be forgotten, while thy merit is honoured and beloved. Thy foibles, for without them thou wouldest not in effect have been so great, will no longer be remembered, and those qualities which distinguish thee from others will alone be seen ! The rich variety of thy language, the judgment with which thou hast boldly invented and created new expressions, the nervous brevity of thy style, and thy striking picture of human manners and defects, will, as the author of "The Characters of German Poets and Prose Writers," has predicted, extend the fame of thy "FRAGMENTS UPON PHYSIOGNOMY" to the remotest posterities, as one of the small number of German originals which do honour to the genius of the age. No person will then



think that LAVATER, a genius who has developed new truths, and created for himself so rich a language, believed in the juggles of GESNER.

Such is the glory which attends the works of great and excellent writers. The life after death which CICERO seemed to hope for with so much enthusiasm, will arrive. The approbation which LAVATER predicted, his work on *PHYSIOGNOMY* will receive, notwithstanding all those injuries that have been heaped upon it both in *Switzerland* and in *Germany*. But if CICERO had been only a *Consul* and LAVATER only a *Thaumaturgus*\*, little of either the one or the other would be recorded in the archives of Time, which swallows up the common characters of life, and only preserves those names for eternity which are worthy of everlasting fame.

The invectives of the vulgar, the indignation of the critics, are wreaked in vain against these celebrated names, and against all those who may be tempted to imitate them. "Why," say each of them to the laughing blockhead, "would you expound the meaning of all that I write, since my finest strokes, glancing thro' your mind, produce only such frigid ideas? Who are you? By what title do you claim to be keeper of the archives of folly, and arbiter of the public taste? Where are the works by which you are distinguished? When and where have you been announced to the world? How many superior characters do you reckon among the number of your friends? What distant country is conscious that such a man exists? Why

\* THAUMATURGUS—one who works miracles; a title given by the priests to those of their saints who were supposed to work miracles. — TRANSLATOR.



“ do you continually preach your *nil admirari* ?  
 “ Why do you strive to depreciate every thing  
 “ that is good, great, and sublime, unless it be  
 “ from a sense of your own littleness and pover-  
 “ ty ? Do you seek the approbation of the weak  
 “ and giddy multitude, because no one else es-  
 “ teems you ? If you despise a fair and lasting  
 “ fame, because you can do nothing that is wor-  
 “ thy of honest praise, the name you endeavour  
 “ to ridicule shall be remembered when yours  
 “ will be forgot.”

The desire of glory is equally natural and al-  
 lowable in men even of little sense and judgment;  
 but it is not from the opinions of such characters  
 that writers expect fame. It is from reflecting  
 and impartial minds ; from the approbation of  
 those virtuous and private characters for whom  
 alone they withdraw from the multitude, and  
 whose bosoms open willingly to a writer, when  
 they observe the confidence with which he de-  
 sires to disclose his sentiments ; it is to obtain  
 the approbation of such persons alone that writers  
 seek the shades of Solitude.

After those who scribble their names on walls  
 and on panes of glass, no character appears to  
 me less formed for glory than the man who writes  
 solely for the place in which he dwells. He who,  
 without being a member of any academy, or  
 literary club, seeks for fame among his fellow-  
 citizens, is a fool who sows his seed upon a rock.  
 They may perhaps pardon something that is  
 good, but nothing that is severe, great, or free.  
 To the prejudiced multitude, therefore, he must  
 learn to be discreetly silent ; for openly to avow  
 sentiments that would do honour to his character,  
 or by which he might acquire the praises of other



men, is only to exasperate against himself all those among whom he lives.

But a writer of true taste and sound judgment is conscious that impartial and rational minds, throughout the universe, adopt other principles in appreciating the merit of a good work, than those which influence the judgment of his fellow citizens. True critics enquire, "Does the work relate to the interests of mankind? Is its object useful, and its end moral? Will it inform the understanding and amend the heart? Is it written with freedom and impartiality? Does it bear the marks of honesty and sincerity? Does it attempt to ridicule any thing that is good or great? Does a manly style of thinking predominate? Does reason, wit, humour, and pleasantry prevail in it? Does it contain new and useful truths? If it inspires noble sentiments and generous resolutions, our judgment is fixed: the work is good, and the author a master of the science."

In the ordinary commerce of the world, in that intercourse of flattery and falsehood where every one deceives and is deceived; where all appear under a borrowed form, profess friendships which they do not feel, and bestow praises only that they may receive them back in return; men bow the lowest to him whom they despise the most, and distinguish every silly woman whom they meet by the title of "*Your Grace*\*." But he who lives retired from the circle of illusion expects no compliments from others, nor bestows them but where they are deserved. A thousand of the insidious grimaces with which we are honoured in public life, are nothing to the sweet converse of private friendship, which inspires us with a noble bold-

\* A title given in Germany to persons of quality.



ness, renders us insensible to all the oppressions of the world, points out the road to true honour, and accompanies us on our way to attain it.

Of what value are all the babblings and vain boastings of society to that domestic felicity which we experience in the company and conversation of an amiable woman, whose charms awaken all the dormant faculties of the soul, and inspire the mind with finer energies than all our own exertions could attain; who in the execution of our enterprizes prompts us by her assistance, and encourages us by her approbation, to surmount every difficulty; who impresses us with the greatness of her ideas and the sublimity of her sentiments; who weighs and examines with judicious penetration our thoughts, our actions, our whole character; who observes all our foibles, warns us with sincerity of their consequences, and reforms us with gentleness and affection; who by a tender communication of all her thoughts and observations, conveys new instruction to our minds, and by pouring all the warm and generous feelings of her heart into our bosoms, animates us incessantly to the exercise of every virtue, and completes the polished perfection of our character by the soft allurements of love and the delightful concord of her sentiments.

In such an intercourse, all that is virtuous and noble in human nature is preserved within the breast, and every evil propensity dies away. The multitude see us as we ought to be in public, and not as we are in Solitude; for in the world we always turn the smooth surface outwards, and carefully conceal all the sharp angles of our characters; by which means we contrive to pass



without doing hurt to any person, and men find pleasure in our company\*.

But we are viewed with different eyes by our fellow-citizens and by contemporary writers. By the latter, our defects as well as our good qualities are easily discernible in our writings, which, if we express one sentiment with sincerity, often become the strongest evidences against us. This idea, however, is consolatory to the feelings of our dear countrymen, to whose ears perhaps the praises we receive may reach, and who are obliged to admit the mortifying idea, that there are people in the world who hold us in some esteem. The human character, it is true, frequently exhibits a singular mixture of virtue and vice, of strength and weakness; and why should we conceal it? Our foibles follow all that is terrestrial in our nature to the tomb, and lie buried with the body which they were produced. The nobler part, if we have performed any work worthy of existence, survives: and our writings are the best wealth we leave behind us when we die.

But, exclusive of this enthusiasm, Solitude affords a pleasure to an author of which no one can deprive him, and which far exceeds all the honours of the world. He not only anticipates the effect his work will produce, but while it advances towards completion, feels the delicious enjoyment of those hours of serenity and composure which his labours procure.

\* "*Le matériel* constitutes the highest degree of merit; and to live in peace, we ought to take great care that the other side of our characters should be perceived," said a great man to me; one of the dearest and most respectable among my friends in Germany.



What pleasure flows through the mind of an established writer, from the uninterrupted attention and the glowing enthusiasm which accompanies it! Sorrows fly from this elegant occupation, and misfortunes are forgot. Oh! I would not exchange one single hour of such perfect tranquility for all those flattering illusions of eternal fame with which the mind of TULLY was so incessantly intoxicated. Solitude, in the midst of continual sufferings, is an enjoyment which not only rationally connects the soul with the present moment, but renders it susceptible of every good impression, and raises it to felicity. The secret pleasure of having produced at least something, is unknown to men of vigorous constitutions; for they confide in the strength of their powers. But to a writer afflicted by ill health, a difficulty surmounted, a happy moment seized, a proposition elucidated, a sentence neatly and elegantly turned, an harmonious period, or a happy expression, are salutary and healing balms, counter-poisons to melancholy, the most precious advantages of Solitude, and infinitely superior to those dreams, those *presentiments* of honour and glory after death. Oh! who would not willingly renounce, for one of these enjoyments, that enthusiasm against which reason opposes so many powerful objections, and which to me does not appear quite satisfactory, except when we do not altogether enjoy our usual presence of mind.

To enjoy himself without being dependent on the aid of others, to devote to employments not perhaps altogether useless those hours which sorrow and chagrin would otherwise steal from the sum of life, is the great advantage of AN



AUTHOR ; and with this advantage alone I am perfectly content. And who is there that does not derive pleasure from Solitude, when he perceives the progress he is capable of making during a few hours, while the multitude roll in their carriages through the street, and make every wall of the house tremble to its foundation ?

The singularities of some writers are oftentimes the effects, and frequently the real advantages, of Solitude. Long absence from all commerce with the world, their dispositions become less flexible and compliant. Even he, however, who has preserved the manners of society, is not fond of being obliged to shew himself in company differently from what he is ; and he seizes the pen from sport, if it be only to afford a single consolation to his feelings.

But in this, perhaps, the world may say, that a writer acts improperly ; and that this easy manner of entertaining the reader neither contributes to his pleasure nor his information. This style of writing, however, has its merit ; literature acquires by it a greater degree of freedom ; it teaches the mind to rise above a creeping servile train of thought, and is more appropriated to the necessities of the time. If a nation is not yet possessed of all that its greatest men could wish, she may attain it, if they are capable of extirpating ancient prejudices, if freedom of sentiment be encouraged, and if, in each province, some philosophical writers should be found who will boldly express their opinions. To entertain readers is, in my opinions, only to deliver freely in writing that which in the general intercourses of society it is impossible to say either with safety or politeness. This is what I



call Liberty; an inestimable treasure! which, under a wise and moderate administration, every one enjoys who lives in Solitude.

In a treatise upon STYLE, printed at *Weymar*, a gentleman appears very strongly to oppose this new manner of writing. In honour of the SOLITUDE and LIBERTY by which it was produced, I should have many things to say to him, although I perfectly coincide with him upon many points. He wishes one general rule to be adopted with respect to STYLE, and I contend for that freedom in literary compositions which will allow of style according to every man's fancy and humour. He thinks that a writer should always have a model before him; I think that every writer is his own model. He wishes writers to follow the style of others; I think that writers should, as much as it is possible, let every thing be their own; not the style alone, but every other property belonging to composition. He is unwilling that the writer should be discoverable in the work; though it appears to me, that he may be permitted publicly to *decompose* the state of his mind, and to make observations on his own character, for the benefit of other men, rather than to leave his body by will to a professor of anatomy. He recommends authors to proceed by regular steps; I hate to be taught by others how I ought to walk. He says, that it is the present fashion with authors to disclose what were the feelings of their souls when they wrote; I cannot altogether conceal how I find myself when I converse with my readers. He appears not inclined that they should conceive themselves alone when they are writing; while very frequently I write, only that I may have the opportunity of expressing one word alone.



This treatise upon the subject of *STYLE*, however, contains in general a true and judicious criticism; and especially towards the conclusion, which is filled with observations equally accurate and profound. This was the only passage through the work of which I disapproved; for although the ramblings, extravagances, and digressions of our *beaux esprits* displease me as much as they do this gentleman, I think, nevertheless, that this free and easy style of writing, which can only be acquired in Solitude, has already produced a greater degree of *LIBERTY* than was heretofore enjoyed; and that this *LIBERTY*, employed with taste and discretion, will promote the circulation of a greater number of useful truths than there still exist of dangerous prejudices.

The light of philosophy has been prevented from penetrating into many recesses, solely because the manners of societies, the voice of the people, and the opinion of the public, follow one uniform step. Every man listens and looks up to the sentiments of his neighbour, and no one dares to deviate from the ordinary mode of judgment. Men of the world, who best know the art of appropriating to themselves the newest and most refined ideas of others, are obliged to conceal them, and to follow the general manners of the age. But when authors begin, from the retreats of Solitude, to appear before the public without dismay; when they study the characters of every description of people, with their manners of acting, and their modes of thinking; when they once dare, with boldness and confidence, to describe things by their true names, and disclose by their writings all those truths which every free and liberal mind



ought to be permitted to disclose; their INSTRUCTION will circulate gradually among the people, the philosophy of human life will spread itself abroad, every man will dare to think for himself, and disdain to be guided by the public opinion. To effect this revolution, however, it is necessary that our writers should be acquainted with a different region than merely that of the University, or even of their own provincial town: their minds must be formed by an intercourse with men of every state and every nation: they must neither fear the great, nor despise the inferior classes of mankind; and they must learn to retire occasionally from this intercourse with the world to long and uninterrupted Solitude; to renounce the seductions of pleasure, to free themselves from the ties of Society, and above all, to become deaf to the praise or censure of those among whom they live, when employed as inducements to the propogation of FALSEHOOD or the suppression of TRUTH.

The Germans felt an Helvetic severity in the taste and style of those works which I formerly wrote, and this severity was without doubt the consequence of my solitary life. THE SPECTATOR of *Thuringia* for four years successively defended me with equal vivacity and skill against the very heavy reproaches, that I was a peevish hypocritical philosopher, who was never pleased with any production, and always viewed the worst side of things; that nothing was sacred from the keenness of my criticism, and the severity of my satire; but that the nation was too modest, too decent, too delicate, and too virtuous to be entertained by such compositions; in short, that ENGLISH Writers were insufferable



to GERMAN delicacy, and of consequence it was impossible to endure the Swiss.

But it appears to me, that they confound the manners of the world with the style of books. Harshness is without doubt excluded from society; whilst, on the other hand, the naked truths which well-written works or letters from time to time disclose, frequently strike the mind, and produce an effect. "I am myself extremely chaste," said a poet, "but I acknowledge that my works are not." A writer therefore, may be civil and polite in his personal intercourse with mankind, and still properly severe in his works. Why should authors write as they speak, if they never speak as they think? Is it not enough that when they mix in Society they endeavour to please every one: that when they have once entered into Society, they submit without exception to whatever the laws of politeness exact; give up whatever is insisted on, maintain no opinions unnecessarily, always yield the privilege of talking to others, and do every thing as if they were only there to hear and learn? Are there not, however, many *beaux esprits* who are insufferable in company, from a vain conceit that their writings are the last best models of elegance and urbanity? Would not such a character act more wisely, to correct, in his commerce with the world, the errors that may have escaped from his pen, than to restrain his pen and never check his tongue? He, alas! who in the circles of Society is kind in his behaviour and complaisant in his manners, may surely be permitted once at least to hazard in his writings a bold or even a harsh expression and to insert here and there a melancholy truth, when so



many others are occupied in circulating sprightly falsehoods.

Energy of thought is banished from the language of conversation. But if the freedom with which an author expresses himself in his writings be insufferable in the intercourse with the world, the soft and meretricious language of Society would be ridiculous in literary composition. An author must speak in the language of TRUTH; in Society a man is in the constant habit of feeling it only, for he must impose a necessary silence upon his lips. The manners of men are formed by intercourse with the world; and their characters by retiring into Solitude. Here they will soon discover whether they have only learned complaisance, or have acquired freedom of thought, firmness of expression, dignity of sentiment, and grandeur of style.

Solitude raises the mind to a high degree of elevation and power. The man who has not courage enough to place himself above the prejudices and fashions of the world; who dreads the reproach of singularity; who forms and conducts himself upon the example of others; will certainly never acquire a sufficient degree of resolution to live a life of voluntary Solitude. It has been well observed that SOLITUDE is as indispensably necessary to give a just, solid, firm and forcible tone to our thoughts, as a knowledge of the world is to give them richness and brilliancy, and to teach us to make a wise and happy application of them.

THE MIND, when employed in the pursuit of noble interesting objects, is cleansed from those impurities with which the habits of indolence stain the vacant breast. THE SOUL, enjoying



freedom and tranquility, feels all its energies with superior force, and displays an extent of power which was before unknown. THE WILL sharpens itself in Solitude; for as the faculties are capable of greater exertions in the leisure it affords, as we enjoy greater liberty and tranquillity, as our ideas become more clear, luminous and extended, as we see with greater certainty into the consequences of things, the mind exacts much more from itself in Solitude than in the world. The tranquility of Solitude, however, must not degenerate into idle ease, into a state of mental numbness or stupefaction. It is not sufficient for this purpose to be continually gazing out of a window with a thoughtless mind, or gravely walking up and down one's study in a ragged *robe de chambre* and worn-out slippers. The exterior of tranquility gives no elevation to the soul, inspires no activity, except when we are well persuaded that Solitude is necessary, or feel it to be a desire of the soul. It is then only that it becomes a precious liberty, animating, at the same instant, both the reason and the imagination.

One of my illustrious friends has frequently assured me, that he never felt so strong an inclination to write as during a review, when forty thousand persons left their houses, and travelled on foot, in carriages, and on horseback, to observe the manœuvres of a single battalion. This friend has published many treatises upon the sciences, but he never wrote a trifle full of wit and gaiety until the day of the review. In early youth, I never felt so strong a disposition to employ my mind on serious subjects as on Sunday mornings, when, far retired in the country, I



heard the sharp and tinkling sound of the village bells, while all my fellow-citizens, occupied in their devotions, frizzled and powdered their heads to go to church.

Continual interruption destroys all the good effects of Solitude. Disturbance prevents the mind from collecting its ideas. This is the reason why an establishment frequently takes away more advantages than it brings. In the world, every person is obliged to attend to the duties of his particular station, and must perform what they exact from him; but in Solitude a man may be just what he wishes, and what he is. If, therefore, a judicious philosopher or a man of genius do not exactly follow the received usages of his station, they say of him, "This is a fool; he only knows how to write books;" or perhaps, "His writings are good, but as for himself, he is an ass."

The mind of a solitary man attacks prejudice and error with as much vigour and courage as an athletic champion meets his adversary. Repeated examinations bring the objects of our attention more near; we behold their properties with greater certainty, and feel more strongly that which we have seen. If the soul enter entirely into itself, it then becomes more easy to work with efficacy on external objects. A man of a reflecting and intrepid mind who retires within his own bosom, seizes TRUTH wherever he discovers her, and regards with the tranquil smile of pity those who think themselves authorised to speak of her with contempt; he hears, without being disconcerted, the invectives which envy and prejudice throw out against him; for he perceives a weak multitude making HUE AND CRY the



moment he opens his hand and unlooses one of the truths which it contains.

SOLITUDE affords us an opportunity to diminish the number of our passions; for out of a multiplicity of trifling inclinations she forms one great desire. It is certainly possible that Solitude may produce dangerous effects upon the passions, but, Providence be thanked! it may also produce the most salutary effects. If it be capable of disordering the mind, it is also capable of effecting the cure. It draws out and separates all the various propensities of the human heart; but it collects and re-unites them all into ONE. Yes, in Solitude we feel and learn not only the nature but the extent and influence of all the passions, which rise up against us like angry waves, and endeavour to overwhelm us in the abyss, until PHILOSOPHY flies to our aid and divides their force. If we do not yield an easy victory, by neglecting all opposition to their attacks. Virtue and Self-denial bring gigantic powers to our assistance that will melt the "rocks and bend the knotted oak." In short, every thing is possible to VIRTUE and RESOLUTION, the instant we learn that one passion is only to be conquered by another.

The mind feels itself proudly dignified by that greatness of soul which we acquire by a commerce with ourselves, and, disdaining every ignoble object, withdraws itself on every side from corrupt Society. A virtuous mind observes the sons of worldly pleasure precipitate themselves into scenes of riot and debauchery without being seduced. In vain is it circulated on every side, that debauchery is the earliest propensity of man, especially of a young man who wishes to know life; in vain is it represented as necessary to form



connexions with girls of the tenderest youth, as it is to eat and sleep; no, the noble mind feels and sees that debauchery renders youth unmanly, insensible to the charms of virtue, and callous to the principles of honesty; that it destroys all resolution, inspires timidity and pusillanimity in the hour of danger, and prevents them from undertaking any great and glorious enterprize; that by the indulgence of *libertinism*, the generous warmth and fine enthusiasm of the soul, its noble fondness for the sublime and beautiful, — all its powers are lost. He, therefore, who retains a wish to appear great and honourable in the world, must renounce for ever the habits of indolence and luxury. The moment he ceases to injure his faculties by debauchery, and discontinues his attempts to renovate them by an excess of wine and luxurious living, he will no longer feel it necessary frequently to take the air, nor to consume the whole day on horseback.

All men without exception have something continually to learn. Whatever may be the distinguished rank which they hold in Society, they can never be truly great but by their personal merit. The more the faculties of the mind are exercised in the tranquility of retirement, the more conspicuous they appear; and should the pleasures of debauchery be the ruling passion, O young man! learn that nothing will so easily subdue it as an encreasing emulation in great and virtuous actions, a hatred of idleness and frivolity, the study of the sciences, a frequent communion with thy own heart, and that high and dignified spirit which views with disdain every thing that is vile and contemptible.



This generous pride discovers itself with dignity and greatness in the retreats of Solitude, where the passion for every sublime object operates with greater freedom than in any other situation. The same passion which carried ALEXANDER into *Asia*, confined DIOGENES to his *tub*. HERACLITUS quitted the throne, to devote himself to the search of *truth*. He who wishes to render his studies useful to mankind, must first have made his observations in the world, without dwelling in it too long or quitting it with regret. The world enervates the mind and destroys its vigour. CÆSAR in the course of a few days tore himself from CLEOPATRA, and became the master of the empire; but ANTHONY took her as his mistress. was for ever in her arms, and by his effeminacy lost both his life and the WORLD.

SOLITUDE, it is true, inspires the soul with high and exalted notions, which are incompatible with the transactions of common life. But a lively ardent passion for whatever is great, points out to the solitary man the possible means of supporting himself on heights which would turn the heads of worldly-minded men. The circumstances which accompany Solitude extend the faculties of the mind, influence the feelings of the heart, and place the man so much above the level of humanity, that he feels himself immortal. To observe upon the life of a man of the world, we should say, that each day ought to be the last of his existence. The pleasures of Solitude make ample compensation for every privation, while the worldly-minded man thinks that all happiness is at an end if he happens to miss a favourite diversion, to be deprived of at



tending his club, or is disappointed in seeing the celebrated conjurer, the new boxer, or the wild beasts just arrived from a strange land, which the hand-bills, of the day have announced.

I never recollect without feeling the warmest emotions that passage where PLUTARCH says, "I live entirely upon HISTORY, and while I contemplate the pictures it presents to my view, my mind enjoys a rich repast from the representation of great and virtuous characters. If the actions of men, which I must necessarily look into, produce some instances of vice, corruption, and dishonesty, I endeavour, nevertheless, to remove the impression, or to defeat its effect. My mind withdraws itself from the scene, and, free from every ignoble passion, I attach myself to those high examples of virtue which are so agreeable and satisfactory, and which accord so completely with the genuine feelings of our nature."

The soul, attached by solitude to these sublime images, forgets every object that would attract it toward the earth, mounts as it proceeds, and casts the eye of disdain on those links which would chain it to the world, and tend to intercept or weaken its flight. At this height the faculties and inclinations develop themselves. Every man, is perhaps capable of doing much more than he performs; and for this reason it is wise and glorious to attempt every achievement which does not appear physically impossible. How many dormant ideas may be awakened; and then, what a variety of early impressions, which were seemingly forgot, revive, and present themselves to our pens! We may always accomplish much more than we conceive, pro-



vided passion fans the fire which imagination has lighted ; for life only appears insupportable, when it is no longer animated by the soft affections of the heart.

A state of existence without passion\* is, in Solitude as well as in every other situation of life, the death of the soul. Disease and long suffering, after I ceased to breathe my native air, occasionally reduced me, during many years, to this horrible condition. While those amongst whom I lived, and who were ignorant of my real situation, thought that I was angry, and expected every moment that I should seize the lance and shield, I passed quietly on my way, and resigned myself with care and cordiality to the beneficent employments of my profession. While the rage against me was general, I remained perfectly insensible, and preserved an inviolable silence. The languors of sickness, the tortures of a wounded heart, the oppression of domestic misfortunes, had vanquished my mind, and rendered it insensible to every other concern. My brain continued during several years as obdurate as marble ; I passed many hours day after day without a thought ; I frequently uttered the direct contrary to what I meant ; I could scarcely take any nourishment ; I could derive no support from that which strengthens others ; I expected every step I took to fall to the ground ; and I suffered all the punishments of Hell,

\* " The force of the passions," says a great philosopher, " can alone counterbalance in the human mind the effects of indolence and inactivity; steal us from that repose and stupidity towards which we incessantly gravitate, and at length endow the mind with that continuity of attention to which superiority of talent is attached."



whenever I sat down with an intention to write. The world contained nothing that could interest me, except only the secret object of my chagrin, which I kept closely locked within my bleeding heart.

The passions have no existence until the moment the corporeal organs become capable of indulging those dispositions which are previously implanted in the breast. The soul therefore, which ought to be kept in a state of constant exercise, acting only by means of these organs, it is necessary that their operations should not be obstructed; for the soul, both in the tranquillity of Solitude and in the hurry of the world, can never become active or enterprizing, while it is impeded by these subaltern agents. Why is it not always in our power to live in Solitude, and according to our inclinations, since it is certain that Solitude affords happiness to the heart in every period of our lives, and leads the mind to the fertile sources of every great conception? How passionately fond of Solitude would every noble-minded youth become, if he were capable of perceiving the variety of grand ideas, sublime sentiments, and profound knowledge, which he might there acquire in the earliest periods of his infancy! A wise old-age finds its happiest days in the retreats of Solitude. The mind there thinks with greater dignity than in the world. In the tranquillity of retirement, we see how every thing ought to be conducted; while in society, we only see how things are carried on. Uninterrupted reflection and profound thought inspire the greatest works which the human mind is capable of producing; while in society, the intellectual spirit evaporates by its

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continual attention to trifling objects. Solitude, on the contrary, must possess a very powerful charm, since so many men forget in retirement all the cares of life, and learn to despise every thing that belongs to earth; they suffer their lands to lie fallow, abandon their crops to weeds, or leave them a prey to the beasts of the field.

When the mind is filled with an enthusiasm for great achievements, it loses, in general, all consideration for trifling objects. This is the reason why, in conducting little concerns, COMMON SENSE\* is much more useful than GENIUS. The ordinary occupations of life destroy the enthusiasm of genius, which nothing will so effectually restore as Solitude, leisure, and liberty. The philosophic observer and profound writer, therefore, have no other resource, when they are surrounded and encumbered by a multiplicity of affairs. Misunderstood and ridiculed, their souls sicken under the general pressure, and become almost extinct; for what inducement can there be to write a great and distinguished work, when the author is previously convinced that every one will endeavour to turn it into ridicule the moment they learn from whose pen it was produced? The desire of fame dies, where merit is no longer rewarded by praise. But remove such a writer or philosopher from the multitude; give them liberty, leisure, pens, ink, and paper, and they are revenged; for they will then produce writings which whole nations

\* "A man of Common sense," says HELVETIUS, "is a man in whose character indolence predominates. He is not endowed with that activity of soul which, in high stations, leads great minds to discover new springs by which they may set the world in motion, or to sow those seeds from the growth of which they are enabled to produce future events."



will be eager to read. A great variety of men, who possess extraordinary talents, remain undistinguished, only because their minds languish under employments which do not require the aid of thought, and which, for that reason, are much better suited to the ignorant vulgar than the refined philosopher.

Solitude restores every thing to its proper place, there the mind rejoices in being able to think, in being enabled to derive pleasures from pursuits which other men dislike, and, of course, in being able to appropriate so much time to itself. The hatred which is generally entertained against solitary men, frequently proves a source of enviable happiness. Indeed it would be a great misfortune to him who is meditating in tranquility the execution of some excellent work, if he were universally beloved: for every one would then be anxious to visit him; he would be pestered with invitations to dinner; and the first question in all companies would be, "Will he come?" Happily, however, Philosophers are not the characters most distinguished and beloved by the world; and they have the pleasure of reflecting, that the public hatred is never universally excited against an ordinary man. Acknowledge, then, that there is something great in that man against whom all exclaim, at whom every one throws a stone, to whose conduct all impute a thousand absurdities, and on whose character all attempt to affix a thousand crimes without being able to prove one. The fate of a man of genius who lives retired and unknown, is still more enviable; he may then remain quiet and alone; and as it will appear natural to him that his sentiments should not be



understood, he will not be surprised if the vulgar should condemn whatever he writes and all he says, or that the efforts of his friends to correct the judgment of the public with respect to his merit, should prove useless.

Such was with respect to the multitude, the fate of the Count SCHAUMBURG-LIPPE, better known by the title of the COUNT DE BUCKENBOURG. Of all the German authors, I never knew one whose writings were more ridiculed or so little understood; and yet his name was worthy of being ranked among the greatest characters which his country produced. I became acquainted with him at a time when he lived almost continually in Solitude and retired from the world, managing his small estate with great discretion. There was indeed, it must be confessed, something in his manner and appearance which at first sight, created disgust, and prevented you from paying a proper attention to the excellent qualities of his mind.

The COUNT DE LACY, formerly Ambassador from *Spain* to *Petersburgh*, informed me at Hanover, that he led the Spanish army against the Portuguese at the time they were commanded by the COUNT DE BUCKENBOURG; the singularity of whose person and manners so forcibly struck the minds of all the Spanish generals, while they were reconnoitering the enemy with their telescopes, that they exclaimed with one voice, Are the Portuguese commanded by "DON QUIXOTE?" The ambassador, however, who possessed a very liberal mind, spoke with enthusiastic rapture of the good conduct of BUCKENBOURG in Portugal, and praised in the warmest terms the excellence of his mind and the



greatness of his character. His heroic countenance, his flowing hair, his tall and meagre figure, and above all the extraordinary length of his visage, might in truth bring back the recollection of the Knight of LA MANCHA; for certain it is, that at a distance he made a most romantic appearance: on a nearer approach, however, a closer view immediately convinced you of the contrary. The fire and animation of his features announced the elevation, sagacity, penetration, kindness, virtue, and serenity of his soul. Sublime sentiments and heroic thoughts were as familiar and natural to his mind, as they were to the noblest characters of GREECE and ROME.

The Count was born in LONDON, and his conduct was without doubt whimsical and extraordinary. The anecdotes related to me by a GERMAN PRINCE (a relation of COUNT GUILLAUME) concerning him, are perhaps not generally known. He was fond of contending with the ENGLISH in every thing. For instance, he laid a wager, that he would ride a horse from LONDON to EDINBURGH backwards, that is, with the horses head turned towards Edinburgh, and the Count's face towards London; and in this manner he actually rode through several counties in England. He not only traversed the greatest part of that kingdom on foot, but travelled in company with a German prince through several of the counties in the character of a beggar. Being informed that part of the current of the DANUBE, above REGENSBERG, was so strong and rapid that no one had ever dared to swim across it, he made the attempt, and swam so far, that



it was with difficulty he saved his life. A great statesman and profound philosopher related to me at HANOVER, that, during the war in which the Count commanded the artillery in the army of PRINCE FERDINAND of Brunswick against the French, he one day invited several Hanoverian officers to dine with him in his tent. When the company were in high spirits and full of gaiety, several cannon balls flew in different directions about the tent. "The French," exclaimed the officers, "cannot be far off.—" "No, no," replied the Count, "the enemy, I assure you, are at a great distance;" and he desired them to keep their seats. The firing soon afterwards re-commenced; when one of the balls carrying away the top of the tent, the officers rose suddenly from their chairs, exclaiming "The French are here."—"No," replied the Count, "the French are not here; and therefore, Gentleman, I desire you will again sit down, and rely upon my word." The balls continued to fly about; the officers, however, continued to eat and drink without apprehension, though not without whispering their conjectures to each other upon the singularity of their entertainment. The Count at length rose from the table, and, addressing himself to the company, said, "Gentlemen, I was willing to convince you how well I can rely upon the officers of my artillery; for I ordered them to fire, during the time we continued at dinner, at the pinnacle of the tent; and they have executed my orders with great punctuality."

Reflecting minds will not be unthankful for these traits of the character of a man anxious to



exercise himself and those under his command in every thing that appeared difficult or enterprising. Being one day in company with the Count by the side of a magazine of gunpowder which he had made under his bed-chamber in FORT WILHELMSTEIN, I observed to him, that "I should not sleep very contentedly there during some of the hot nights of summer." The Count, however, convinced me, though I do not now recollect how, that the greatest danger and no danger is one and the same thing. When I first saw this extraordinary man, which was in the company of an English and a Portuguese officer, he entertained me for two hours with a discourse upon the physiology of HALLER, whose works he knew by heart. The ensuing morning, he insisted on my accompanying him in a little boat, which he rowed himself, to FORT WILHELMSTEIN, which, from plans he shewed me of his own drawing, he had constructed in the middle of the water, where not a foot of land was to be seen. One Sunday, upon the great parade at PYRMONT, surrounded by many thousand men who were occupied in dress, dancing, and making love, he entertained me on the very spot during the course of two hours, and with as much tranquility as if we had been alone, by detailing all the arguments that have been used to prove the existence of God, pointing out their defective parts, and convincing me that he could surpass them all. To prevent my escape from this lesson, he held me fast the time by the button of my coat. He shewed me, at his seat at BUCKENBOURG, a large folio volume in his own hand writing, "On the Art of defending a small Town against a great



“Power.” The work was completely finished, and designed as a present to the king of Portugal; but he did me the favour to read many passages respecting the security of SWISSERLAND. The count considered the Swiss invincible; and pointed out to me not only all the important parts which they might occupy against an enemy, but shewed me roads which a CAT would scarcely be able to crawl through. I do not believe that any thing was ever written of higher importance to the interests of any country than this work; for the manuscript contains striking answers to all the objections that a Swiss himself could make. My friend M. MOYLES MENDELSON, to whom the Count had read the Preface to this work at PYRMONT, considered it as a masterpiece, both for its correct language and fine philosophy; for the Count could write the French language with almost the same ease, elegance, and purity as VOLTAIRE; while in the German he was laboured, perplexed, and diffuse. What adds to his praise, is, that upon his return to PORTUGAL, he had with him, for many years, two of the most accute masters of Germany; first ABBT, and afterwards HERDER. Those who see with more penetrating eyes than mine, and have had more opportunities to make observations, are able to relate a variety of remarkable anecdotes concerning this truly great and extraordinary man. I shall only add one observation more respecting his character, availing myself of the words of SHAKESPEARE: the Count GUILHAUME DE SCHAUMBERG LIPPE carries no dagger;



"He has a lean and hungry look" —

" — but he's not dangerous ;

" — he reads much ;

" He is a great observer ; and he looks

" Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays ;

" — he hears no music ;

" Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort,

" As if he mock'd himself, and scorn'd his spirit

" That could be mov'd to smile at any thing ;

JULIUS CÆSAR, *Act I. Scene 4.*

Such was the character, always misunderstood, of this solitary man. A character of this description may well smile, when he perceives himself scoffed at by the world ; but what must be the shame and confusion of those partial judges, when they shall behold the monument which the great MENDELSON has erected to his memory ; or the judicious history of his life which a young author is about to publish at HANOVER ; the profound sentiments, the noblest style, the truth and sincerity of which will be discovered and acknowledged by impartial posterity.

The men who laugh, as I have seen them laugh a thousand times, at BUCKENBORG, on account of his long visage, his flowing hair, his great hat, and little sword, may very well indulge their smiles of scorn, if, like the Count they are philosophers and heroes. The COUNT DE BUCKENBORG, however, never smiled at the world or upon men but with kindness. Without hatred, without misanthropy, he enjoyed the tranquility of his country-house, situated in the bosom of a thick forest, frequently alone, or with the virtuous woman whom he had chosen for his wife ; and for whom, while living, he did not appear to entertain any extraordinary



fondness ; but when she died, his affection for her was so great, that the loss of her brought him almost to the grave.

It was thus that the people laughed at THEMISTOCLES, in Athens. They reviled him openly as he passed along the streets, because he did not possess the manners of the world, the TON of good company, and was ignorant of that accomplishment which was called genteel breeding : one day, however, he retorted upon these railers with the keenest asperity. " It is true," said he, " I never learned how to tune a lyre, or " play upon a lute ; but I know how to raise a " small and inconsiderable city to glory and greatness."

Solitude and philosophy therefore, although they may inspire sentiments at which the world will laugh, banish every mean and sordid idea from the mind, and prepare the way for the grandest and most sublime conceptions. He who is accustomed to study the characters of great men, and to admire elevated sentiments, will almost imperceptibly adopt a romantic style of thinking, which may frequently afford an ample subject to laughter. The romantic mind always views things differently from what they are or ever can be ; and a constant habit of contemplating the sublime and beautiful, renders such characters in the eyes of the weak and wicked ridiculous and insupportable. Men of this turn of mind always discover a nobleness of soul which frequently offends the fashionable world ; but it is not on that account less noble. The philosophers of India annually quitted their solitude to visit the palace of the king, when each of them, in his turn, delivered his advice upon the go-



vernment of the state, and upon the changes and limitations which might be made in the laws. He who three successive times communicated false or unimportant observations, lost, for one year, the privilege of speaking in the presence of the sovereign. There are many other romantic philosophers, who would require much more, but would do nothing. PLOTINUS requested the Emperor GALIENUS to confer upon him the sovereignty of a small city in CAMPANIA, and the lands appendant to it. The city was to be called PLATONOPOLIS; for PLOTINUS had promised to reside there with his friends and followers, and realize the republic of PLATO. But it happened then, as it frequently happens now in many courts to philosophers much less chimerical than PLOTINUS—the courtiers laughed at the proposal, and told the emperor that the philosopher was a fool, whose mind experience could not reform.

The picture of the greatness and virtue of the ancients produces, in Solitude, the happiest influence upon minds susceptible of those ideas and sentiments. Sparks of that bright flame which warmed the bosoms of the great and good, sometimes operate the most unexpected effects. To cheer the drooping spirits of a lady in the country whose health was impaired by a nervous affection, I advised her to read very frequently the history of the Greek and Roman Empires. At the expiration of three months she wrote to me, “With what veneration for antiquity have you inspired my mind! What are the buzzing race of the present age, when compared with those noble characters! History heretofore was not my favorite study; now I live only on its



“ pages. I feel during the progress of my study  
“ the strongest inclination to become acquaint-  
“ ed with all the transactions of GREECE and  
“ ROME. It has opened to me an inexhausti-  
“ ble source of pleasure and health. I could not  
“ have believed that my library contained so in-  
“ estimable a treasure : it will become dearer to  
“ me than any thing I inherit. In the course of  
“ six months you will no longer be troubled with  
“ my complaints. My PLUTARCH has already be-  
“ come more valuable to me than all the triumphs  
“ of coquetry, or all that sentimental writing ad-  
“ dressed to ladies in the country who are inclined  
“ to be all heart, and with whom SATAN plays  
“ tricks of love with the same address as a *dilletante*  
“ plays tricks of music on the violin.” This  
lady who, I confess, is learned, gives me fur-  
ther information respecting the conduct of her  
kitchen, and the management of her poultry  
yard ; but she has recovered her health, and I  
think she will hereafter find as much pleasure in  
house-keeping and feeding her chickens as she  
did formerly from the pages of PLUTARCH.

The history of the grandeur and virtue of the  
ancients cannot operate for any length of time  
except in the tranquility of retirement, or  
among a small circle of men ; but it may pro-  
duce in the event the happiest effects. The  
mind of a man of genius is during his solitary  
walks filled with a crowd of ideas which appear  
ridiculous to his fellow-citizens ; but the period  
will arrive, when they will lead millions to per-  
form actions worthy of immortality. The Swiss  
Songs composed by LAVATER appeared at a  
time unfavourable to their reception, and when



the Republic was in a declining state. The Swiss Society of SCHINTZUACH, who had prevailed upon that ardent genius to compose those songs, offended the French Ambassador, and from that time the Society was exclaimed against from every corner of the kingdom. The great HALLER himself pointed his epigrams against the Members in every letter which I received from him; for they had long refused to admit him into the Society. He considered us as enemies to orthodoxy, and as disciples of JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU, a man hateful to his eyes. The president of the Committee for the Reformation of Literature defended at ZURICH the Swiss songs of LAVATER, from the excellent motive, That it was not proper to stir up the old *dung-hill*. No poet of GREECE, however, wrote with more fire and force in favour of his country than LAVATER did for the interests of Swisserland. I have heard children chaunt these songs with patriotic enthusiasm, and seen the finest eyes filled with tears while their ears listened to the singer. Rapture glowed in the breasts of the Swiss peasants to whom they were sung, their muscles swelled, the blood inflamed their cheeks. Fathers with whom I am acquainted have carried their infant children to the chapel of WILLIAM TELL, to sing in full chorus the song which LAVATER wrote upon the merits of that great man. I have made the rocks re-echo to my voice, by singing these songs to the music which my heart composed for them in the fields and upon those celebrated mountains where these heroes, the ancestors of our race, signalized themselves by their immortal valour. I thought myself encom-



passed by their venerable shades. I fancied that I saw them still armed with their knotted clubs breaking to pieces the crowned helmets of Germany, and, although inferior in numbers, forcing the proud nobility to seek their safety by a precipitate and ignominious flight.

This, I shall perhaps be told, is romantic! for romantic ideas can only please solitary and recluse men, who always see objects in a different point of view from the multitude around them. Great ideas, however, sometimes penetrate in spite of the most obstinate resistance. In republics they operate insensibly, and inspire elevated sentiments, which may become extensively useful in times of trouble and commotion.

Every thing unites in Solitude to raise the soul and fortify the human character, because the mind there habituates itself, much better than in the world, to noble sentiments and heroic resolutions. The solitary man possesses a charm against all the shafts of stupidity, envy and wickedness. Resolved to think and to act upon every occasion in opposition to the sentiments of narrow minds, he attends to all the contrarieties he meets with, but is astonished at none. Entertaining a just and rational esteem for friends; but sensible also that they, like enemies, generally indulge their feelings to excess, that all of them are partial, and inclined to form too favourable a judgment, he appeals therefore to the judgment of the public; not indeed, to the public of his own city, who always consider the *person* and not the *thing* in controversy, who never decide until they have heard the opinions of two or three *beaux esprits*; but he appeals to the world at large, at whose impartial tribunal he appears, and, with his works in his hand, demands the justice that is due.



But it is commonly thought that Solitude by elevating the sentiments, renders the mind unfit for business : this, however, I do not believe. It must ever be highly beneficial to raise the soul by the advantages of retirement, and to exercise the mind in Solitude in such a manner as will prevent our tottering so frequently in the world, and give us full possession of it in all the events of public life. The love of truth is preserved by Solitude, and virtue there acquires a greater firmness ; although I acknowledge that in business it is not needful always to tell the truth, and that a rigid virtue frequently miscarries in the affairs of life.

The virtue and simplicity of manners which Solitude produces, are revered by the GREAT and GOOD of every clime. It was these inestimable qualities which, during the highest fury of the war between ENGLAND and FRANCE, obtained the philosophic JEAN ANDRE DE LUC, the reception he met with at the court of *Versailles*, and inspired the breast of the virtuous the immortal DE VERGENNES with the desire to reform, by means of a philosopher, the heads of the citizens of Geneva, which he, with all the power of the Prime-Minister of France, had not been able to effect. DE LUC, at the request of the minister, made the attempt, but failed of success ; and France, as it is well known, was obliged to send an army to reclaim the GENEVESE. It was upon his favourite mountains that the philosopher JEAN ANDRE DE LUC acquired that simplicity of manners which he still preserves amidst all the luxury of LONDON, where he endures with firmness all the wants, refuses all the indulgencies, and sub-



duces all the desires of social life. At HANOVER I could only remark one single instance of luxury in which he indulged himself: when any thing vexed his mind, he chewed a little morsel of sugar, and, of course, always carried a small supply of it in his pocket.

Solitude not only creates simplicity of manners, but prepares and strengthens the faculties for the toils of busy life. Fostered in the bosom of retirement, the mind feels a greater degree of activity when it engages in the transactions of the world, and retires again into tranquility to repose itself, and prepare for a new conflict. PERICLES, PHOCION, EPAMINONDAS, laid the foundation of all their greatness in Solitude: they there acquired that style which is not to be learned in the forum of the university—the style of their future lives and actions. When the mind of PERICLES was occupied by important objects, he never appeared in the streets except to transact his business, and instantly renounced feasting, public assemblies, and every other pleasure of the kind. While the administration of the affairs of the republic was in his hands, he only went once to sup with a friend, and came away very soon. PHOCION immediately resigned himself to the study of philosophy, not from the ostentatious motive of being called a wise man, but to place himself in a condition to conduct the business of the State with greater resolution and effect\*. The people were astonished, and enquired of each other when and by what means EPAMINONDAS, after having passed his whole

\* Thus TACITUS speaks of HELVIDIUS PRISCUS; "*Ingenium illustre altioribus studiis juvenis admodum dedit, non ut magnifico nomine otium velaret, sed quo firmior adversus fortune rempublicam capefferet.*"



life in study, had not only learned, but as it were all at once exercised the military art in its highest perfection. He was frugal of his time, devoted his mind entirely to the delights of literature, and, desiring nothing so much as to be exempt from business, withdrew himself from every public employment. His country forced him from the retreats of Solitude, gave him the command of the army, and he saved the republic.

A character upon which I never reflect but with the highest transports, the character of PETRARCH, was formed entirely in Solitude, and was by that means rendered capable of transacting the most complicated political affairs. PETRARCH was without doubt, sometimes, what persons very frequently become in Solitude, cholerick, satirical, and petulant. He has been reproached with great severity for the lively pictures he has drawn of the manners of his age, and particularly for his portrait of the scenes of infamy which were transacted at AVIGNON under the reign of Pope CLEMENT THE SIXTH. But PETRARCH was perfectly acquainted with the human heart, knew how to manage the passions with uncommon dexterity, and to conduct them directly to his purpose. The ABBE DE SADES, the best historian of his life, says, "PETRARCH  
 " was scarcely known except as a tender and  
 " elegant poet, who loved with unextinguishable  
 " ardour, and sung in all the harmony of  
 " verse the graces of his mistress; and nothing  
 " more is known of his character." They knew not all the obligations that literature, which he reclaimed from the barbarity under which it had been so long buried, owes to his pen. They knew not that he saved the works



of the best writers of antiquity from dust and rottenness ; that all these precious treasures would have been lost to us, if he had not dug them from the grave, and procured correct copies of them to be made. They were ignorant, perhaps, that he was the first restorer of the *belles lettres* in Europe ; that he purified the taste of the age ; that he himself thought and wrote like an ancient citizen of Rome before its fall ; that he extirpated a multitude of prejudices, preserved his courage and his firmness until the hour of his death, and that his last work surpassed all those which had preceded it. Still less were they informed, that PETRARCH was an able statesman, to whom the most celebrated sovereigns of his age confided every difficult negociation, and consulted in their most important concerns ; that in the fourteenth century he possessed a degree of fame, credit, and influence, which no man of learning of the present day has ever acquired ; that three popes, an emperor, a sovereign of France, a king of Naples, a crowd of cardinals, the greatest princes, the most illustrious nobility of Italy, cultivated his friendship, and solicited his correspondence ; that, as a statesman, a minister, an ambassador, he was employed in transacting some of the greatest affairs of the age ; that he was thereby placed in a situation to instruct them in the most useful and important truths ; that to Solitude alone he owed all this power ; that no person was better acquainted with its advantages, cherished it with greater fondness, or resounded its praises with higher energy ; and that he at length preferred LIBERTY and LEISURE to all the enjoyments of the world. He appeared a long time enervated by LOVE, to which he had con-



fecrated the prime of his life ; but he suddenly abandoned the soft and effeminate tone with which he sighed at LAURA's feet ; addressed himself with manly boldness to kings, to emperor's, to popes ; and ever afterwards maintained that confidence which fine talents and a great character always inspire. With an eloquence worthy of DEMOSTHENES and CICERO, he exhorted the princes of Italy to make peace among themselves, and to unite their powers against the common enemies, the barbarians, who tore to pieces the very bosom of their country. He encouraged, guided, and supported RIENZI, who appeared like a guardian-angel sent from heaven to re-establish the original splendour of the city of ROME. He incited a pusillanimous emperor to penetrate into the heart of Italy, and to seize, as the successor of the CÆSARS, the government of the empire. He conjured the popes to replace the holy chair, which they had transported to the borders of the RHINE, once more upon the banks of the TIBER. At a time even when he acknowledges, in one of his writings, that his mind was filled with vexation, his bosom tormented by a tender passion which he was incessantly endeavouring to conquer, disgusted with the conduct of men, and tired with public life, Pope CLEMENT THE SIXTH, who, without doubt, was ignorant of what was passing in his heart, intrusted him with a negociation of great difficulty to the court of NAPLES. PETRARCH undertook the charge. He confesses, that the life of a court had rendered him ambitious, busy, and enterprising ; and that it was laughable to behold a hermit, accustomed to live in woods, and traverse the plains,



now running through the magnificent palaces of cardinals, with a crowd of courtiers in his *suite*. When JOHN VISCONTI, Archbishop and Prince of MILAN, and sovereign of all LOMBARDY, a man who united the finest talents with an ambition so insatiable that it threatened to swallow up all ITALY, had the happiness to fix PETRARCH in his interests, and by inducing him to undertake the office of private Secretary, to gain every thing that could accompany such an acquisition, a philosopher and man of learning, who esteemed Solitude above any other situation; the friends of PETRARCH exclaimed, "How! " this bold republican, who breathed no sentiments but those of liberty and independence, " this untamed bull, who spurned at the shadow " of the yoke; who disdained to wear any other " fetters than those of LOVE, and who frequently found even these too heavy; who refused so " many advantageous offers from the court of " ROME, and preferred his liberty to all the enslaving charms of gold, now voluntarily submits to the shackles of the tyrant of Italy; " this misanthrope, who could no longer exist " but in rural tranquility; this great apostle of " Solitude, has at length quietly taken his habitation amidst the tumults of MILAN!"—— " My friends," replied PETRARCH, " you are " perfectly right; man has not a greater enemy " than himself. I have acted contrary to my " inclination, and against my own sentiments. " Alas! in all the transactions of our lives, we " do those things that we ought not to do, and " leave undone those things to which we are " most inclined." But PETRARCH might have told his friends, " I was inclined to give you an



“ example of what a man is able to do in the  
 “ affairs of the world, when he has sufficiently  
 “ exercised the powers of his mind in Solitude,  
 “ and to convince you, that a previous retirement  
 “ confers liberty, firmness, expression, solidity,  
 “ dignity, and nobility, upon all the transactions  
 “ of public life.”

Aversion from the commerce of the world, and the frivolous employments of the Metropolis, inspires the mind with a sufficient degree of courage to despise the prejudices of the age, and the opinions of the multitude; a courage which is therefore seldom found except among solitary men. The commerce of the world, far from fortifying the soul, only weakens it, in the same manner that enjoyment, too frequently repeated, blunts the edge of every pleasure. Oh! how frequently the best plans fail of success from difficulties of execution, notwithstanding the accuracy and excellence with which they are formed! How many happy thoughts have been stifled at the moment of their birth, because they then appeared rather too bold! When a literary work appears, no enquiry is made concerning the excellence of the matter or the elegance of its composition.. The reader seeks only to divine the intention of the author; construes every expression contrary to its import; perceives a vein of satire where in fact no satire exists, where it would be impossible that there should be any; and disfigures even those respectable truths which the author discloses in the sincerity of his heart, and for which every just and honest mind will silently thank him.

The President MONTESQUIEU experienced this treatment at Paris in the meridian of his



plendour; and for this reason he has observed, in the defence of his immortal work, "*The Spirit of Laws*,"—"Nothing stifles knowledge more than covering every thing with a doctor's robe; for the men who are continually teaching, are great hindrances to learning. There is no genius that is not contracted, when it is enveloped by a million of vain scruples. Although you have the best intentions that were ever formed, they will even force the mind to doubt its own integrity. You can no longer employ your endeavours to speak or to write with propriety, when you are perplexed with the fear of expressing yourself ill, and when, instead of pursuing your thoughts, you are only busy in selecting such terms as may escape the subtlety of the critics. They seem inclined to place a biggin on our heads, and to warn us at every word, *Take care you do not fall. You would speak like yourself, but I would have you speak like me.*" If you attempt to soar, they pull you by the sleeve, and impede your flight. If you write with life and spirit, they instantly deprive you of it. If you rise to some height, they take out their rule or their compass, and lifting up their heads, desire you to come down, that they may measure you; and in running your course, they advise you to take notice of all the impediments which the ants have raised in your way."

MONTESQUIEU says, "that no science nor literature is proof against this pedantry." But, Did he not himself resist it? Does not his work continue to be reprinted? Is it not read with universal applause?



The writer who knows, and dares to paint the characters of men, must, without doubt, wear a triple shield upon his breast: but, on the other hand, there is no book worth reading without this style of painting. There are certainly truths in every good work, against which the indignation of those who are interested will naturally arise. Why do the English so far surpass us in their speculations upon mankind? Why do we appear so puerile, when compared with them, or with the Greek and Roman writers, on every subject that respects the description of human manners? It proceeds from the clamours which are raised against every author who hazards any opinions upon the philosophy of life for the general benefit of mankind. We who honour in so high a degree the courage of the warrior, why, like effeminate SYBARITES, do the foldings of a rose-bud trouble our repose? Why do we vomit forth injuries against that civil courage, the courage without arms, the *domesticas fortitudines* of CICERO.

It is false, that there is neither heart nor spirit except in REPUBLICS; that under the democratic form of government alone people may speak the TRUTH with freedom and safety, and he who thinks well may think freely. In ARISTOCRACIES especially, and even under a constitution much more free, but where a single demagogue possesses the sovereign power, unhappily, alas! they too frequently consider common-sense as a crime. This absurdity renders the mind timid, and, of course, deprives the people of all their liberty. In a MONARCHY, punishment, is, in almost every instance, prescribed by the laws of



justice; but in REPUBLICS it is inflicted by prejudice, passion, and state-necessity. Under a republican form of government, the first maxim parents inculcate into the minds of their children is, not to make themselves enemies. To this sage counsel I remember replying, when I was very young, "My dear mother, do you not know, that he who has no enemies is a poor man?" The citizen is, in many republics, under the authority and vigilant eyes of more than a hundred princes; but a monarch is the sole prince on whom his subjects are dependent. The number of masters in a republic crushes the spirit; but in a monarchy, love and confidence in ONE alone, raises the spirits of the happy people. In every country, however, the rational man, who renounces all the useless conversations of the world, who lives a life of Solitude, and who, superior to every thing that he sees, to all that he hears, forms the integrity of his mind in the tranquility of retirement, by an intercourse with the heroes of GREECE, of ROME, and of GREAT BRITAIN, lays a permanent foundation for his future character, and acquires a noble style of thinking, independent of the caprices of the vulgar.

THESE are the observations I had to make respecting the Influence of Solitude upon the Mind. Many of them are perhaps undigested, and many more are certainly not well expressed.

Dear and virtuous young man, into whose hands this book perchance may fall, receive with kindness and affection the good which it contains, and reject all that is cold and bad;



all that does not touch and penetrate the heart. But if you thank me for the performance, if you bless me, if you acknowledge that I have enlightened your mind, corrected your manners, and tranquilised your heart, I shall congratulate myself on the sincerity of my intentions, and think my labours richly rewarded. If, in perusing it, you find yourself able to justify your inclination for a wise and active Solitude, your aversion from those societies which only serve to destroy time, and your repugnance to employ vile and shameful means in the acquisition of riches, I shall ask no other benediction for my work. If you are fearful of opening your lips; if you labour under the continual apprehension of saying something that may be considered ridiculous, in the understandings of those who have granted to themselves the monopoly of WIT and TASTE, and who, by virtue of this usurpation, go about uttering the greatest absurdities—ah! then THINK, that in such company I should be considered an equal blockhead with yourself.

The sentiments of my mind and the feelings of my heart have guided me in every thing that I have written upon the subject of Solitude. It was this that occasioned a lady of great wit to observe, on reading the two first parts of this work, that I should unbosom myself upon every thing that I felt, and should lay down my pen the moment those feelings were expressed. This method of writing has certainly produced faults which a systematic philosopher would not have committed. But I shall console myself for these errors, if this Chapter affords only a glimpse of the advantage of Solitude upon the minds, the



understandings, and the characters of men ; and that which follows shall excite a lively sensation of the true, noble and sublime pleasures which Solitude produces by a tranquil and affectionate contemplation of nature, and by an exquisite sensibility for every thing that is GOOD and FAIR.



## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

THE INFLUENCE OF SOLITUDE UPON  
THE HEART.

**P**EACE OF MIND is, upon earth, the supreme good. Simplicity of heart will procure this invaluable blessing to the wise mortal who, renouncing the noisy pleasures of the world, sets bounds to his desires and inclinations, cheerfully submits himself to the decrees of Heaven, and, viewing those around him with the eye of charitable indulgence, feels no pleasure more delightful than those which the soft murmur of a stream falling in cascades from the summit of rocks, the refreshing breezes of the young zephyrs, and the sweet accents of the woodland chaunters, are capable of affording.

How refined our sentiments become when the tempests of life have subsided; when those misfortunes which caused our afflictions have vanished; when we see ourselves surrounded by friendship, peace, simplicity, innocence, repose, and liberty!

The heart, to taste the charms of retirement, need not be without emotion. Oh! who would not prefer to every other enjoyment the soft melancholy which Solitude inspires? Who would not renounce the universe for one single tear of LOVE? The heart is susceptible of this felicity, when it has learned to admire with equal pleasure NATURE in its sublimest beauties, and in the



modest flower which decorates the valley ; when it has learned to enjoy, at the same time that infinite system, that uniform succession of parts, which expands the soul, and those delicious details which present soft and pleasant images to the mind. These pleasures are not exclusively reserved for strong energetic minds, whose sensations are as lively as they are delicate, and upon whom, for that reason, GOOD and BAD make an equal impression. The purest happiness, the most enchanting tranquillity, are also within the reach of men whose temperament is cold ; who, endowed with imaginations less bold and lively, always perceive something extravagant in the energetic expression of a still more energetic sensation : in the pictures, therefore, which are presented to the eye of such characters, the colouring must not be high, nor the tints too sharp ; for, as the bad strikes them less, so also they are less susceptible of the livelier enjoyments.

The heart owes the most agreeable enjoyments which it derives from Solitude to the IMAGINATION. The touching aspect of delightful nature ; the variegated verdure of the forests ; the noise of an impetuous torrent ; the quivering motion of the foliage ; the harmony of the groves, and an extensive prospect, ravish the soul so entirely, and absorb in such a manner all our faculties, that the thoughts of the mind are instantly converted into sensations of the heart. The view of an agreeable landscape excites the softest emotions, and gives birth to pleasing and virtuous sentiments : all this is produced by the charms of imagination.

The imagination spreads a touching and seductive charm over every object, provided we are



surrounded by freedom and tranquility. Oh! how easy it is to renounce noisy pleasures and tumultuous assemblies for the enjoyments of that philosophic melancholy which Solitude inspires! A religious horror and soft raptures are alternately excited by the deep gloom of forests, by the tremendous height of broken rocks, and by the multiplicity of sublime and majestic objects which present themselves to our view on the delightful scite of a smiling landscape. There are no sensations, however painful, which are not vanquished by these serious but agreeable emotions, and by those soft reveries to which the surrounding tranquility invites the mind. The Solitude of retirement and the awful silence of all nature impress an idea of the happy contrast between simplicity and grandeur. Our feelings become more exquisite, and our admiration more lively, in proportion to the pleasures we receive.

I had been, during the course of many years, familiar with the sublimest appearances of nature, when I saw, for the first time, a garden cultivated in the English taste near HANOVER; and soon afterwards I beheld one in the same style, but on a much larger scale, at MARIENVERDER about the distance of a league from the former. I was not then apprised of the extent of that art which sports with the most ungrateful soil, and, by a new species of creation, converts even barren sandy mountains into fertile and smiling landscapes. This magic art makes an astonishing impression on the mind; it excites in every heart, not yet insensible to the delightful charms of cultivated nature, all the pleasures which Solitude, rural repose, and a seclusion from the haunts of men, can procure. I cannot recollect



a single day during the early part of my residence at HANOVER, without tears of gratitude and joy. Torn from the bosom of my country, from the embraces of my family, and driven from every thing that I held dear in life, my mind was not susceptible of any other sentiments than those of the deepest melancholy. But when I entered into the little garden of my late friend M. DE HINUBER, near HANOVER, I forgot, for the moment, both my country and my grief.

The charm was new to my mind. I was not then apprised that it was possible upon so small a scale, to imitate the enchanting variety and the noble simplicity of nature. I was not till then convinced that her aspect alone was sufficient, at the first view, to obliterate all the oppression of the world, to excite in our breasts the purest luxury, to fill our minds with every sentiment that can create a fondness for life. I still bless the hour when I first learned this secret.

This new re-union of ART and NATURE, which was invented not in *China* but in *England*, is founded upon a refined taste for the beauties of nature, confirmed by experience, and by the sentiments which a chaste fancy reflects upon a feeling heart. HIRCHFELD, the great painter of nature, an amiable and sensible philosopher, the first German who by his admirable theories introduced among us a knowledge of gardening, is become, by conferring this knowledge, one of the greatest benefactors to his country.

There are, without doubt, many GERMAN-ENGLISH gardens so whimsically and ridiculously laid out, that they only excite emotions of pity and contempt. Who can forbear laughing to see



forests of poplar-trees scarcely large enough to warm a chamber-stove for a week ; mole-hills, which they call mountains ; menageries of tame and savage animals, birds and amphibious creatures, grinning in native grandeur upon tin ; bridges without number across a river which a couple of ducks would drink dry ; wooden fishes swimming in canals which the pump every morning supplies with water ? All this is certainly still less natural than the pitiful taste of our ancestors. But if on the contrary, in the garden of M. HINUBER at *Marienverder*, every look elevates my soul towards God, if every point of view affords to the soul sublime repose, if on every bank I discover scenes ever smiling and ever new, if my heart feels relief from the aspect of this enchanting place, shall I amuse myself by discussing, whether what I see might have been done in a different way, and permit the insipid pleasantries of cold and tasteless masters to diminish my pleasures ? Scenes of serenity, whether created by tasteful art or the hand of nature, always convey tranquility to the heart ; a kindness which it owes to the imagination. If a soft silence breathes around, and every object is pleasant to my view ; if rural scenes absorb all my attention, and dissipate the grief that lies heavy on my heart ; if the loveliness of Solitude enchants me, and gradually subduing my soul, leave it full of benevolence, love, and content ; I ought to thank God for those powers of imagination which, although it has indeed frequently caused the trouble of my life, has always led me, to some friendly rock ; upon which I could hang while I contemplated with greater composure the



tempests I had escaped.\* A celebrated English writer has said, that " SOLITUDE, on the first view of it, inspires the mind with terror, because every thing that brings with it the idea of privation is terrific, and therefore sublime, like space, darkness, and silence. In *Switzerland*, and especially near the Canton of *Berne*, the Alps have at a distance an astonishing grandeur of appearance; but viewed nearer, they inspire images terrific and sublime. That species of grandeur which accompanies the idea of infinity, charms the eye when seen at a proper distance. The heart feels nothing but rapture, while the eye observes from afar the uninterrupted chain of these immense mountains, these enormous masses rising one above the other. The succession of soft and lively shades temper the impression, and give to this prodigious wall of rocks, more of the agreeable than the sublime. On the contrary, a mind of sensibility cannot take a near view of these mountains, without feeling an involuntary trembling. The eye looks with fear on their eternal snows, their deep descents, their obscure caverns, the torrents which precipitate themselves with resounding noise over

\* A French writer has embellished this idea with all the riches of eloquence. " There is no mind of sensibility which has not tasted in the retreats of SOLITUDE those delicious moments when MAN, flying from the delusions of falsehood, enters into his own heart to seek the sparks of truth! What pleasure, after having been tossed during many years on the sea of life, to climb some friendly rock, and reflect in peace and safety on the tempest and shipwrecks which ensued! Happy the man who can then forget the idle prejudices which occupy the mind: the miseries of humanity vanish from his sight; august TRUTH fills his bosom with the purest joys. It is only in these moments, and in those which precede the dissolution of our moral frame, that MAN can learn what he is upon this earth, and what this earth is to him."



their summits forming innumerable cascades, the dark forests of fir with which their sides are overcharged, and the enormous fragments of rocks which the tempests have detached from their foundations during the course of time. How my heart beat, when for the first time, I climbed through a steep and narrow path upon those sublime deserts, continually discovering new mountains rising over my head, while upon the least stumble death menaced me in a thousand different shapes below ! But imagination soon begins to kindle, when you perceive yourself alone in the midst of all this grandeur of nature, and reflect from these heights on the nothingness of human power, and the weakness of the greatest Monarchs !

The History of the Swiss evinces that the inhabitants of these mountains are not men of a degenerated cast, but that their sentiments are elevated, and their feelings warm. Their boldness and intrepidity is innate ; the spirit of liberty gives wings to their souls ; and they trample tyranny and tyrants under their feet. But the spirit of liberty is only to be found in its genuine refinement among the Alps ; for all the Swiss are not in reality free, although they have notions of liberty, love their country, and return their thanks to the Almighty for that happy peace which permits each individual to live quietly under his vine, and to enjoy the shade of his fig-tree.

The Alps in *Switzerland* are inhabited by a race of men, sometimes unfociable, but always good and generous. The severity of their climate renders them hardy and robust, while their pastoral life adds softness to their characters.



An Englishman has said, that he who never heard thunder in the Alps, cannot conceive any idea of the continuity of the lightning, the rolling and the burst of the thunder which roars round the horizon of these immense mountains. The inhabitants of the Alps therefore, who have never seen better houses than their own cabins, or any other country than their native rocks, conceive every part of the universe to be formed of the same rough materials, and a scene of unceasing tempests.

But Heaven is not always threatening; the lightning does not continually flash upon their eyes; immediately after the most dreadful tempests, the hemisphere clears itself by slow degrees, and becomes serene. The heads and hearts of THE SWISS are of a similar nature; kindness succeeds to anger; and generosity to the most brutal fury; which might be easily proved, not only from the records of history but from recent facts. One of the inhabitants of these stupendous mountains, GENERAL DE REDIN, born in the Canton of *Schitzwz*, was enrolled very early in life in the Swiss guards, and had attained the station of Lieutenant General; but his long residence at *Paris* and *Verfailles* had not in any degree altered his character; and he continued through life a Swiss. The orders issued by the Court of *Verfailles* in the year 1764, for the regulation of the Swiss who were in the service of that Court, occasioned great discontents in the Canton of *Schwitz*. The citizens considered this innovation as extremely prejudicial to their ancient privileges, and they threw the blame of this measure upon GENERAL REDIN. At this crisis the wife of



the General, who resided on his estate, was exerting all her interest to raise recruits; but the sound of the French drum was become disgusting to the ears of the citizens of the Canton, and they saw with indignation the *white cockade* placed in the hats of the deluded peasants. The Magistrate, apprehensive that this fermentation might ultimately cause some insurrection among the people, thought it his duty to prohibit MADAME DE REDIN from continuing to raise her levies. The lady required him to give a certificate in writing of this prohibition; but the Magistrate was not at that moment inclined to act with this spirit against the interest of FRANCE; and the wife of the General continued to raise her recruits. This bold measure irritated the inhabitants of the Canton; they summoned a General Diet, and MADAME DE REDIN appeared before the FOUR THOUSAND. "The drum," said she, "shall never cease to beat, until you give me a certificate, which may justify my husband to the Court of France for not completing the number of his men." They granted her the certificate she demanded, and the General was at the same time enjoined to use his interest at the Court of France, for the service of his country. These measures being adopted, the Canton waited in anxious expectation of receiving satisfactory accounts from PARIS; but unhappily very dissatisfactory accounts arrived. The feelings of the inhabitants were irritated beyond restraint; and those who were possessed of credit and authority publicly maintained that the new regulation endangered both their liberties and their religion. The general discontent was instantly con-



verted into universal fury. The Diet was again assembled, and it was publicly resolved not to furnish the King of France with any troops hereafter. The treaty of alliance in 1713 was torn from the archives of the country, and GENERAL REDIN was ordered to return immediately with the soldiers under his command, upon pain of perpetual exile. REDIN obtained the King's leave of absence for himself and his regiment; and they returned to their own country. The General entered *Schwitz*, the metropolis of the Canton, at the head of his troops, with drums beating and colours flying. They marched towards the church; REDIN placed the colours by the side of the great altar, fell upon his knees, and offered up his thanks to God. He then discharged to his soldiers the arrears of their pay, gave them their accoutrements and clothes, and with tears in his eyes, while they wept around him, took his leave. The fury of the populace seemed to increase, when they found themselves in possession of a man whom they considered as a perfidious wretch, a traitor who had favoured the new regulations at the Court of *Versailles*, and who had conspired to give a mortal blow to the interests of his country. The General Diet assembled, and REDIN was summoned to disclose the manner in which these new regulations had passed, in order that they might know the terms on which they stood with FRANCE, and learn the degree of offence the traitor had committed, so that they might afterwards grant him a pardon, or apportion his punishment. REDIN, perfectly aware that under the real circumstances of the case, eloquence would be vainly exerted against



minds heated in the cause, contented himself with saying roughly, and in few words, that all the world knew the manner in which things had passed, and that he was as innocent with regard to the new regulation as he was of his dismissal. "The traitor then will not confess!" exclaimed the most furious of the Members; "hang him on the next tree—cut him to pieces." These menaces were instantly repeated by the whole assembly; REDIN, however continued perfectly tranquil. A troop of furious peasants mounted THE ROSTRUM, while REDIN stood by the side of the Magistrates. It was at this time raining. A young man, the godson of REDIN, held a *parapluie* over his head. One of the enraged multitude with a blow of his stick, broke the *parapluie* to pieces, exclaiming, "Let the villain be uncovered." Rage swelled the bosom of the youth. "Ah! ah!" said he, "I did not know that my god-father had betrayed his country; but since it is so, bring me a cord this moment, that I may strangle him." The Members of the Council formed a circle round the General, and entreated him with uplifted hands to think of his danger; to confess that he had not perhaps opposed the regulation with proper vehemence; and to offer the sacrifice of his whole fortune as a reparation for the offence he had committed, on condition that they would spare his life. REDIN walked out of the circle with a grave and tranquil air, and made the sign of silence with his hand. The whole Assembly waited with impatience to hear the General confess; and the greater number of the Members flattered him with the hopes of pardon. "My



“ dear countrymen,” said the General, “ you  
“ are not ignorant that I have served the King  
“ of France two and forty years. You know,  
“ and many among you who were with me in  
“ the service can bear witness of its truth, how  
“ frequently I have appeared in the face of the  
“ enemy, and the manner in which I have  
“ conducted myself in several battles. I con-  
“ sidered every engagement as the last day of my  
“ life. But here I protest, in the presence of  
“ Almighty God, who knows all hearts, who  
“ listens to my words, who is to judge us all,  
“ that I never appeared before the enemy with  
“ a conscience so tranquil, pure, and innocent ;  
“ and am ready at this instant to yield up my  
“ life, if you think proper to condemn me for  
“ not confessing an infidelity of which I have  
“ not been guilty.”

The dignity with which the General delivered this declaration, and the rays of truth which beamed upon his countenance, calmed the fury of the assembly, and he was saved. But RENDIN and his wife soon afterwards quitted the canton. She entered into a religious convent at URI, and he retired into a deep cavern among the rocks, where he lived two years in Solitude. The fury of his countrymen, however, at length subsided ; he returned to the canton, and rewarded their ingratitude by the most signal services. Every individual then recollected the integrity and magnanimity of the General ; and to compensate the injuries and injustice he had received, they elected him BAILLI, or first officer of the canton : nay, what very rarely happens, they afterwards elected him three times successively to this important dignity.



This is the characteristic disposition of the people who inhabit the Alps of SWISSERLAND; alternately mild and violent; following in the extreme the dictates of a bold and lively imagination. Their passions and affections experience the same vicissitudes as their climate. But I candidly acknowledge, that I would rather live in Solitude among the rocks of URI, than be perpetual BAILLI on the canton of SCHWITZ. The continual view of the sublime desarts of the Alps may perhaps contribute to render THE SWISS rude and unpolished; but, as in every similar situation, their hearts are improved in kindness and good-nature, by the tranquility of their fields, and the smiling beauty of the scenery by which they are surrounded. The English artists acknowledge, that the face of nature in SWISSERLAND is too sublime and too majestic for the pencil to render a faithful representation of it. But what exquisite enjoyments must they not experience upon those romantic hills, in those agreeable vallies, upon the happy borders of those still and transparent LAKES\*!

\* How I love to read in the Letters upon SWISSERLAND by the professor MEINERS, with what amiable sensibility that philosopher seated himself upon the banks of the Lake of BIEL, and quietly resigned himself to all the emotions of his soul!—"When I am fatigued;" says M. MEINERS to one of his friends at GOTTINGEN, "and it pleases my fancy  
 " to consider more attentively the several objects which surround me, I seat myself upon the first bank, or the wall  
 " of a vine under which people continually pass. I never  
 " indulge this disposition, without experiencing an inexpressible tranquility. The last time, it was about six  
 " o'clock while the sun was sinking behind the ridge of JURA.  
 " The dark green firs which grow almost alone to a certain  
 " height on the mountain; the oaks of a brighter verdure  
 " which succeed them; the vines, still livelier in their tints,



Ah! it is there that nature may be closely examined: it is there that she appears in her highest pomp and splendour. If the view of the oak, the elm, the dark firs which people these immense forests, convey no pleasures; if the sight of those majestic trees excites no pleasing emotions in your mind, there still remain the myrtle of Venus, the almond-tree, the jessamine, the pomegranate, and those eminences covered with luxurious vines. Reflect, that in no country of the globe nature is more rich and variegated in her appearances than in SWISSERLAND, and that it was the landscape and the lake of ZURICH which inspired the IDYLLS of the immortal GESSNER, the most agreeable of all the poets of nature.

These sublime beauties raise and fire the heart; and operate upon the imagination in a much more lively manner than even more agreeable scenes; as a fine night affords a more august and solemn spectacle than the finest day. In coming from FRESCATI, by the side of the small lake of NEMI, which lies in a deep valley so enclosed by mountains and forests that the winds never agitate its quiet surface, it is impos-

“ in the middle of which I was seated : and a considerable  
 “ portion of the Lake, which by that means appeared more  
 “ extensive, was in the shade ; while the other part of the  
 “ Lake, the opposite shore, BIEL, and NIDAW, and the  
 “ tops of the GLACIERS were still brightened by the last  
 “ rays of the sun. Below, the bleating of the flocks trans-  
 “ ported me in idea to the smiling plains of ARCADIA :  
 “ above, I heard the hum of peasants, and of fishermen,  
 “ whose boats I could scarce discover ; with the affecting  
 “ murmur of THE LAKE, gently rolling its waves against  
 “ the rocks which over-hang its banks.”



fible not to exclaim with the English poet, that here—

“ Black melancholy fits and round her throws  
 “ A death-like silence, and a dread repose :  
 “ Her gloomy presence saddens all the scene,  
 “ Shades every flower, and darkens every green,  
 “ Deepens the murmur of the falling floods,  
 “ And breathes a browner horror on the woods.”

POPE, *Eloisa to Abelard*, ver. 165.

While the soul expands, and the mind becomes serene and free, you suddenly discover from the garden of the Capuchins, near ALBANO, the little melancholy lake with all the mountains and forests which surround it, the castle of GANDOLPHO, with FRESCATI and all its rural villas on one side; on the other, the handsome city of ALBANO, the village and castle of RICCIA and GEUSANO, with their hills decked with vine-leaves; below, the extensive plains of CAMPANIA, in the middle of which ROME, formerly the mistress of the universe, raises its majestic head; and lastly, beyond all these objects, the hills of TIVOLI, the APPENNINES, and Mediterranean sea\*.

Thus the view of *sublime* or *beautiful* objects differently affect the heart: the *SUBLIME* excite fear and terror; the *BEAUTIFUL* create only soft and agreeable sensations. But both of

\* A German Lady, who possesses a very lively imagination, undertook a voyage to Italy for the re-establishment of her health. Her strength increased day after day. When she found herself on the *site* of ALBANO, above described she endeavoured to express to her companions the emotions which the view of this scene had occasioned; but her feelings were so exquisite, that they deprived her of the power of utterance, and she actually remained several days without being able to speak.



them enlarge and aggrandize the sphere of the imagination, and enable us more satisfactorily to seek enjoyments within ourselves.

To experience these pleasures, however, it is not necessary to seek the solitary retirements of SWISSERLAND and ITALY. There is no person, who may not, by quietly traversing the mountains with his gun, and without running after poetic images, like KLEIST\*, learn to feel how much the great scene of nature will influence the heart, when assisted by the powers of imagination. The sight of an agreeable landscape, the various points of view which the spacious plains afford, the freshness of the zephyrs, the beauty of the sky, and the appetite which a long chase procures, will give feelings of health, and make every step seem too short. The privation of every object that can recal the idea of dependance, accompanied by domestic comfort, healthful exercise, and useful occupations, will add vigour to thought, give warmth to imagination, present the most agreeable and smiling images to the mind, and inebriate the heart with the most delicious sensations. A man with a fine imagination would be more happy in a dark prison than, without imagination, amidst the most magnificent scenery. But even to a mind deprived of this happy faculty, the tranquillity of rural life, and the views of harvest, will alone perform miracles upon the heart. Who among us, alas! has not experienced, in the hours of languor and disgust, the powerful effects which a view of the enchanting pleasures

\* M. KLEIST, a celebrated poet of Germany, distinguished by his poem upon SPRING.



enjoyed by the village rustic is capable of affording ing? How fondly the heart partakes of all his joys! With what freedom, cordiality, and kindness, we take him by the hand, and listen to his plain unlettered tales! How suddenly do we feel our bosoms interested in every object that surrounds us! How soon all the secret inclinations of our souls are displayed, refined, and meliorated! Rural scenes have a variety of pleasures for those who, buried in the sink of cities, have scarcely any knowledge of what pleasure is.

A French officer on his return to his native country after a long absence, exclaimed, "It is only in rural life that a man can truly enjoy the treasures of the heart, himself, his wife, his children, and his friends. The country has, in every respect, the greater advantage over the town. The air is pure, the prospects smiling, the walks pleasant, the living comfortable, the manners simple, and the mind virtuous. The passions unfold themselves without injury to any person. The bosom inspired by the love of liberty, feels itself dependent on Heaven alone. Avaricious minds are continually gratified by the endless gifts of nature; the warrior may follow the chase; the voluptuary may cultivate the rich fruits of the earth; and the philosopher indulge his contemplation at ease."—Oh! how strongly this writer moves and interests my heart, when he tells me, by this affecting passage of his work,—"I should prefer a residence in my native fields to all others; not because they are more beautiful, but because I was brought up there. The spot on which we pass our earliest days possesses a secret charm.



“ an inexpressible enchantment, superior to any  
 “ other enjoyment the world affords ; and the  
 “ loss of which no other country can compen-  
 “ sate: the spot where the gambols of my in-  
 “ fant days were played ; those happy days  
 “ which passed without inquietude or cares.  
 “ The finding of a bird’s nest then filled my  
 “ bosom with the highest joy. What delight  
 “ have I felt from the caresses of a partridge,  
 “ in making it peck at me, in feeling its little  
 “ heart beat against my hand ! Happy he who  
 “ returns to the place of his first attachment ;  
 “ that place where he fondly fixed his love on all  
 “ around him ; where every object appeared  
 “ amiable to his eyes ; the fertile fields in which  
 “ he used to run and exercise himself ; the or-  
 “ chards which he used to pillage\*.”

These delightful sentiments engrave indelibly  
 on our heart the remembrance of our infant re-  
 sidence in the country, of those happy times  
 which we passed with so much pleasure in the  
 charming Solitudes of our native country. Thus,  
 at every period of our existence, and in every  
 place, the freedom and tranquility of a country  
 life will induce us to exclaim with the sacred  
 orator, “ How happy is the wise and virtuous  
 “ man, who knows how to enjoy tranquility  
 “ with true dignity and perfect ease, indepen-  
 “ dent of every thing around him ! How pre-  
 “ ferable is the happy calm he there tastes to  
 “ the deafening clamour, to the false joys and  
 “ dazzling splendour of the fashionable world !

\* To this passage, in the French translation of this work, is  
 subjoined the following note :—“ Not knowing the traveller  
 “ who is here alluded to, we beg his excuse for having ven-  
 “ tured to translate it into *French* from the text in *German*.”



“ What refined, noble, generous sentiments  
 “ rise and unfold themselves in retirement, which,  
 “ during the din of business and the dissipations  
 “ of pleasure, lie concealed at the bottom of the  
 “ soul, fearful of the contemptuous sneer of  
 “ wicked and unthinking minds.”

O ! my beloved ZOLLIKOFER\*, I have felt in the pleasures of a retired domestic life the truth of those doctrines which you announced to us at LEIPSICK; those useful doctrines which do not inculcate into the mind a cold and sterile theology, but wise and virtuous precepts which warm and animate the heart. I have seen, as you described, that in the bowers of retirement a man of business may forget his bickerings and painful altercations, that if he cannot banish them from his mind, he may drown his cares in the bosom of friendship; that his heart will dilate to the charms of consolation and hope; that his countenance will brighten, and all his pains and disquietudes suspend their rage until he has gained sufficient strength to support them, or prepared proper remedies to drive them quite away. I have observed the man of learning in retirement abandon the thread of his laborious researches, retreat from the labyrinths of study, and find in the enjoyments of innocence, and the noble simplicity of his domestics, more truth and tranquility, more aliment for the heart and information for the mind, than in all the precepts of art and erudition. I have observed every one there to obtain the portion of praise and approbation which he merits, and that he obtains them from a person whose praise and ap-

\* A celebrated preacher in Germany.



probation it is his utmost ambition to acquire. I have seen the unfortunate relieved, the wretched made happy, the wanderer put into his right way ; I have seen, in short, every body thus find by degrees satisfaction and content.

Sometimes, indeed, the calm of rural life, and the view of nature's charms, inspires a species of soft and tranquil melancholy. The noisy pleasures of the world then appear insipid, and we taste the charms of Solitude and repose with increased delight. The happy indolence peculiar to Italians, who, under the pleasures of a clear unclouded sky, are always poor but never miserable, contributes greatly to improve the heart.— The mildness of their climate, the fertility of their soil, their religious peaceful and contented dispositions compensate for every thing. DOCTOR MOORE, an English traveller, of whose works I am extremely fond, says, that “ the  
 “ Italians are the greatest loungers in the world :  
 “ and while walking in the fields, or stretched  
 “ in the shade, seem to enjoy the serenity and  
 “ genial warmth of their climate with a degree  
 “ of luxurious indulgence peculiar to themselves.  
 “ Without ever running into the daring excesses  
 “ of the English, or displaying the frisky  
 “ vivacity of the French, or the invincible  
 “ phlegm of the German, the Italian populace discover a species of sedate sensibility to  
 “ every source of enjoyment, from which, perhaps, they derive a greater degree of happiness  
 “ than any of the other.”

Under this pleasing privation of those objects which afflict and torment the heart, it is in truth almost impossible for the mind to avoid an occasional indulgence of agreeable chimeras and ro-



romantic sentiments ; but, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, this condition has its fair side. Romantic speculation may lead the mind into extravagant resolutions and erroneous systems, may frequently foment base and contemptible passions, habituate the mind to a light and unsubstantial mode of thinking, prevent it from exerting its faculties with activity and ardour to rational ends, and obscure that prospect of happiness which a life of simplicity and moderation presents to our view. The soul also may quit with regret the ideal world on which it dwells with such fond delight ; and perhaps these illusions also may not only impede the discharge of the ordinary duties of life, but prevent the mind from tasting any of its pleasures. It is certain, however, that romantic sentiments do not always render the mind unhappy. Who, alas ! has ever realized the happiness he has frequently been enabled to enjoy by the pleasures of imagination ?

ROUSSEAU, in his youth, was a great reader of romances ; and being soon hurried away by the love of those imaginary objects, with which this species of reading and the fertility of his own imagination filled his mind, he disregarded every thing by which he was surrounded. This was the source of that taste for Solitude which he preserved to the most advanced period of his life ; a taste in appearance dictated by melancholy and misanthropy, but which he attributed to the irresistible impulses of a heart too kind, too tender, too affectionate ; and not being able elsewhere to gratify his feelings by sentiments sufficiently warm and animated, he was constrained to live on fiction.



There are wanderings of the imagination which may be indulged in Solitude to gratify the feelings of the heart, without doing any injury either to our sentiments or sensations. In every situation of my life I have always found some individual to whom my heart has fondly attached itself. Oh ! if my friends, who I have left in SWISSERLAND, knew how frequently, during the silence of the night, I pass with them those hours which should be sacred to sleep ; if they knew, that neither time nor absence can efface from my mind the remembrance how dear they have been to me from my earliest youth to the soft remembrance dissipates my sorrows, and present moment ; if they knew how speedily they make me forget misfortune, they would perhaps rejoice to find that I still live among them in imagination, although I may be dead to them in reality.

Oh ! let not a solitary man, whose heart is warmed by sentiments noble and refined, ever be thought unhappy ! He, of whom the stupid vulgar so freely complain ; he, whom they conclude to be the victim of every melancholy idea, of every sombrous reflection, frequently tastes of inexpressible pleasures. The French conceived the good ROUSSEAU to be of a gloomy disposition. He certainly was not so during a great portion of his life ; he certainly was not so when he wrote to M. DE MALHERBE, the chancellor's son, " I cannot express to you, Sir, " how much I have been affected by perceiving " that you esteem me the most unhappy of " mankind. The public will, without doubt, " judge of men as you do, and this is the cause " of my affliction. Oh ! that the fate which I



“ have experienced were but known to the  
“ whole universe ! that every man would en-  
“ deavour to follow my example : peace would  
“ then reign throughout the world ; men  
“ would no longer dream of calumniating each  
“ other ; and there would no longer be wicked  
“ men, when no one would find it their interest  
“ to be wicked.—But in what could I, in short,  
“ find enjoyment when I was alone ?—In my-  
“ self, in the whole universe, in every thing  
“ that does, in every thing that can exist  
“ therein ; in all that the eye finds beautiful in  
“ the real world, or the imagination in the in-  
“ tellectual. I collected about me every thing  
“ that is flattering to the heart ; my desires were  
“ the rule of my pleasures. No ! the most vo-  
“ luptuous have never experienced equal de-  
“ lights ; and I have always enjoyed my chime-  
“ ras much more than if they had been reali-  
“ sed.”

There is undoubtedly a high degree of rhapsody in these expressions ; but oh ! ye stupid vulgar, who would not prefer the warm wanderings of ROUSSEAU'S mind to your cold understandings ? who would not voluntarily renounce your empty discourses, all your felicities, urbanities, noisy assemblies, pastimes, and prejudices ? who would not prefer a quiet and contented life in the bosom of a happy family ? who would not more willingly seek in the silence of the woods, upon the delightful borders of a still lake, those pleasures of simple nature which leave so delightful an impression, those joys so pure, so affecting, so different from your own ?

ECLOGUES are fictions, but they are fictions of the most natural and agreeable kind, the



purest and most sublime descriptions of rural happiness. If you are inclined to taste of real pleasures, you must seek them in retirement, where the soul feels itself altogether disengaged from the torments and oppression of the world: where she no longer feels those artificial wants which only contribute to render her more unhappy, whether she is capable of gratifying them, or seeks hopelessly to indulge them; where alone she preserves her refinement and simplicity. The man who neither sees nor hears those things which may affect the heart, who content with little is satisfied with all, breathes nothing but love and innocence, and perceives the golden age of the poets revived, of which the worldly minded-man so unjustly regrets the loss. Serenity, love, and a taste for the beauties of nature, were not advantages peculiar to the woods of ARCADIA: we may all live in ARCADIA if we please. The feelings of the heart, the innocent pleasure we derive from admiring a meadow covered with flowers, a crystal spring, and a pleasant shade, afford universal enjoyment.

POPE ascribes the origin of poetry to the age that immediately succeeded the creation. The first employment of mankind was the care of flocks, and therefore the most ancient sort of poetry was probably *pastoral*. It is natural to imagine that anciently shepherds must have endeavoured to divert the happy leisure of their solitary and sedentary life; and in such a situation what diversion could be more agreeable than singing? and in their songs what could be more natural than to celebrate their own felicity? Such was probably, in the opinion of POPE,



the origin of *pastorals* ; descriptions of the calmness and tranquility with which the life of a shepherd was attended, and designed, to create in our bosoms a love and esteem for the virtues of a former age.

GOODNESS communicates itself by means of these happy fictions, and we bless the poet, who, in the ecstasy of his own felicity, endeavours to render others as happy as himself. SICILY and ZURICH have produced two of these benefactors to mankind. The mind never beholds nature under a more beautiful aspect, we never breathe a purer air, the heart never beats so tenderly, the bosom never feels more refined delight, than when we read the *Idylls* of THEOCRITUS GESSNER\* ; and it is my peculiar gratification, my dear GESSNER when I recal to mind the pleasures I have received in our correspondence.

\* Perhaps no writer throughout Europe has more judiciously criticised the IDYLLS of GESSNER than the incomparable BLAIR in his "Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Letters," where he says, "Of all the moderns M. GESSNER, a Poet of Swisserland, has been the most successful in his pastoral compositions. He has introduced into his Idylls (as he entitles them) many new ideas. His rural scenery is often striking, and his descriptions are lively. He presents pastoral life to us with all the embellishments of which it is susceptible ; but without any excess of refinement. What forms the chief merit of this poet, is, that he writes to the heart ; and has enriched the subject of his Idylls with incidents, which give rise to much tender sentiment. Scenes of domestic felicity are beautifully painted. The mutual affection of husbands and wives, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, as well as of lovers, are displayed in a pleasing and touching manner. From not understanding the language in which M. GESSNER writes, I can be no judge of the poetry of his style : but, in the subject and conduct of his pastorals, he appears to me to have outdone all the moderns."



It is by these easy and simple modes that the beauties of nature operate upon the heart in aid of the imagination, that rural life inspires the soul with the mildest sentiments, and that Solitude leads us to happiness. The mind, indeed, drawn away by these agreeable images, often resigns itself too easily to romantic ideas ; but they frequently give birth to fancies which amend the heart without doing any injury to the understanding, while the happy fictions and most agreeable remembrances spread their flowers along the thorny paths of life.

The heart frequently feels no repose, the highest happiness on earth, except in Solitude : but the term "repose" does not always signify sloth and indolence. The transition from that which is painful to that which is pleasant, from the restraints of business to the freedom of philosophy, may also be called repose. It was from this idea that P. SCIPIO said, that he was never less idle than in the hours of leisure, and never less alone than when alone. To strong energetic minds leisure and Solitude are not a state of torpidity, but a new incentive to thought and action ; and, when they rejoice that the happy completion of one labour enables them immediately to commence another, it is for the heart and not for the mind that they ask repose.

It is but too true, alas ! that he who seeks for a situation exempt from all inquietude follows a chimera. He who is inclined to enjoy life, must not aspire to repose as *an end*, but only as a *means* of re-animating his activity. He must therefore prefer such employments as are best suited to the extent and nature of his capacity, and not those which promise compensation and



enjoyment without pain and labour, which leave one portion of the faculties inert, steep the senses in forgetfulness, and promise pleasures and advantages which require no exertions to attain.

Repose is not to be found in indolence, but by taking immediate advantage of the first impulse to action. If the misfortunes of those we love always make us unhappy ; if the grief of those whom we observe under sufferings tear our hearts ; if the acute feelings of compassion for the unfortunate poison all our pleasures, envelope the appearances of the world in shades of the darkest melancholy, render our existence painful, our faculties incapable of exertion, and deprive us even of ability to practise the virtues which we feel ; if we for months and years vainly endeavour to deliver ourselves from the most cruel sufferings, we must then absolutely fly to SOLITUDE. But oh ! may *the Beauty* which accompanies our retreat be an Angel of Virtue, who in our descent to the vale of death will conduct and support us by *her* wisdom in a noble and sublime tranquility.

Amidst the concatenation of passions and misfortunes of which I was the sport and victim, I knew no hours more happy than those in which I forgot the world and was forgotten by it. Those happy hours I always found in the silence of the groves. All that oppressed my heart in public life, all that in the vortex of the world only inspired me with disgust, fear or constraint, then fled far away. I admired the silence of surrounding nature, and while I enjoyed the scene, the softest and most delicious sensations filled my breast.



How often in the inebriety of pure and ineffable delight have I, on the approach of spring, admired the magnificent valley where the ruins of the residence of RODOLPHO DE HAPSBURG rises upon the side of a hill crowned with woods, whose variegated foilage presents all the hues which verdure can produce! There I beheld the AAR descend in a torrent from the lofty mountains, sometimes forming itself into a vast basin enclosed by steep banks, sometimes precipitating itself through narrow passages across the rocks, then winding its course quietly and majestically through the middle of smiling and fertile plains, whilst on the other side the RUFFS, and lower down, the LIMMAT bring the tribute of their streams, and peaceably unite with the waters of the *Aar*. In the middle of this rich and verdant carpet I beheld the Royal Solitude where the remains of the Emperor ALBERT THE FIRST repose in silence with those of many princes of the House of Austria, Counts, Knights, and Gentlemen, killed by the SWISS. At a distance I discovered the long valley where lie the ruins of the celebrated city of *Vindonissa*\*,

\* VINDONISSA was a very large and well-fortified Roman village, which served as a fortress to the EMPERORS against the irruptions of the *Germans*. In this place they continually kept a very numerous garrison to overawe those dangerous neighbours, who frequently established themselves on the borders of the *Rhine*, and pillaged the plains of the *Aar*, notwithstanding the fortresses the Romans had erected on the banks of that river. The Emperor CONSTANTINE CHLORUS defeated the Germans in the year 297 between the *Rhine* and the *Aar*; but at the beginning of the fourth century, the Romans lost all their power in that country, and VINDONISSA was taken and destroyed by the Germans. It appears, indeed, that it was rebuilt; for the Episcopal chair was, during the reigns of the French Emperors, established in this city, but, in con-



upon which I have frequently sat and reflected on the vanity of human greatness. Beyond this magnificent country, ancient castles raise their lofty heads upon the hills, and the far distant horizon is terminated by the romantic and sublime summits of the *Alps*. In the midst of all this grand scenery, my eyes were involuntarily cast down into the deep valley immediately below me, and continued fixed upon the little village where I first drew my breath. I traced all the houses, and every window of the house which I had inhabited. When I compared the sensations I then felt, with those which I had before experienced, I exclaimed to myself,—

“ Why, alas! does my soul thus contract it-  
 “ self, when surrounded by so many objects ca-  
 “ pable of inspiring the sublimest sentiments?  
 “ Why does the season, so lively and serene,  
 “ appear to me so turbulent and dismal? Why  
 “ do I feel, on casting my eyes below, so much  
 “ uneasiness and disgust, when but a moment  
 “ ago, on viewing those romantic objects, I  
 “ felt my heart expand with tranquility and  
 “ love, pardoned all the errors of misguided  
 “ judgment, and forgot the injuries I have  
 “ received? Why are that little knot of men  
 “ who are assembled under my feet so fretful  
 “ and discordant? Why is a virtuous character  
 “ so horrid to their sight? Why is he who go-  
 “ verns so imperious, and he who is governed

sequence of being again destroyed; was towards the year 579 removed to *Constantia*. It was among the remains of this celebrated city, that the Counts WINDICH and ALTEMBERG dwelt in the tenth century. Of all this grandeur, the ruins only are now to be seen; below which, near the castles of WINDICH and ALTEMBERG, is the little village of *Brugg*, where I was born.



“ so abject ? Why is there in this place so little  
 “ liberty and courage ? Why are there so few  
 “ among them who know themselves ? Why is  
 “ one so proud and haughty, another so mean  
 “ and groveling ? Why, in short, among be-  
 “ ings who are by nature equal, does pride and  
 “ envy so egregiously prevail, while they per-  
 “ ceive the natives of these groves perch with-  
 “ out distinction upon the highest and the  
 “ lowest boughs, and unite their songs to cele-  
 “ brate the praises of the Creator ?” Having  
 finished my soliloquy, I descended from my  
 mountain satisfied and peaceable, made my most  
 profound reverences to MESSIEURS the Burgo-  
 masters, extended my hand with cordiality to  
 one of my inferiors, and preserved the happiest  
 tranquility, until by mixing with the world the  
 sublime mountain, the smiling valley, and the  
 friendly birds, vanished from my mind.

Thus rural Solitude dissipates all those ideas  
 which displease us in the society of men, changes  
 the bitterest feelings into the sweetest pleasures,  
 and inspires an ecstasy and content which the  
 votaries of the world can never experience. The  
 tranquility of nature silences every criminal in-  
 clination in the corrupted heart ; renders us  
 blithe, amiable, open, and confident ; and  
 strengthens our steps in the paths of virtue, pro-  
 vided we direct the passions to their proper end,  
 and that an overheated imagination does not fabri-  
 cate fancied woes.

The attainment of all these advantages is,  
 without doubt, a task rather too difficult to per-  
 form in the Solitude of cities. It appears easy  
 indeed to retire to our apartment, and raise our  
 minds by silent contemplation above the confide-



ration of those objects by which we are surrounded. But few persons enjoy sufficient opportunities to do this; for within doors, a thousand things may occur to interrupt the course of our reflections; in the streets, and in company, a thousand cross accidents may happen to confound our vain wisdom; and peevish painful sensations will soon aggravate the heart and weaken the mind, when not upheld by objects sufficiently affecting.

ROUSSEAU was always extremely unhappy in PARIS\*. This extraordinary genius, indeed, wrote his immortal works while he resided in the Metropolis; but the moment he quitted his house, his mind was bewildered by a variety of opposite sentiments, his ideas abandoned him, and the brilliant writer, the profound philosopher, he who was so intimately acquainted with all the labyrinths of the human heart, became almost a child.

In the country, we leave home with greater safety, cheerfulness, and satisfaction. The solitary man, if tried with meditating in his study, has only to open his door and walk abroad; tranquility of mind attends his steps, and pleasure presents herself to his view at every turn. He extends his hand with cordiality to every man, for he loves and is beloved by every man he meets. Nothing ever occurs to irritate his passions; he is under no dread of experiencing the disdain of an imperious Countess or a haughty Baron, proud of their titles! no mocked upstart drives over him with his coach.

\* I can truly say, that all the time I lived at *Paris*, was only employed in seeking the means of being able to live out of it.



Frontless vice dares not venture on the protection of musty title-deeds, nor the power of a weighty purse to offer an indignity to modest virtue.

But in PARIS, as well as in every other city, a man who withdraws himself from the busy scenes of life will never feel such sentiments as these, while he lives in peace with his own heart, and his nerves are not weakened or unstrung: it is these defects that render us the sport of men's unworthy passions; for to a man of weak nerves every object is irritating and displeasing.

Our days even under the languors of a weak constitution, and surrounded by the most unpleasant objects, pass quietly away in the most active scenes of life, provided we are at peace with ourselves. Our passions are the gales by the aid of which man ought to steer his course across the ocean of life, for it is the passions alone which give motion to the soul; but when they become impetuous, the vessel is in danger, and runs a-ground. Pain and grief find no entrance into those bosoms that are free from remorse. The virtuous forget the past, form no idle speculations on the future, and do not refine away their happiness, by thinking that what is good may still be better. Every thing is much better than we imagine. The anxious wishes of an ardent mind are seldom satisfied; for with such characters fruition is indeed frequently accompanied with discontent. The streams of content must flow from ourselves, taking its source from a deliberate disposition to learn what is good, and a determined resolution to seek for and enjoy it, however small the portion may be.



To acquire that happy tranquility which men expect to find in Solitude, it is not sufficient to regard every object that presents itself to their view with supineness or surprise. He who, without employment, without having a plan of conduct previously digested and arranged, hopes for happiness in Solitude, will find himself to yawn at his cottage in the country just as often as he did at his mansion in town, and would do much better to employ himself in hewing wood the whole day, than to loiter about in boots and spurs. But he who, living in the most profound Solitude, keeps himself continually employed, will acquire, by means of labour, true tranquility and happiness.

PETRARCH would have found this tranquility in his Solitude at VAUCLUSE, but that his heart sighed so incessantly for his beloved LAURA. He was, however, perfectly acquainted with the art of vanquishing himself. "I rise," said he, "at midnight; I go out by break of day. I study in the fields, as well as in my chamber. I read, I write, I think. I endeavour to conquer the least disposition to indolence, and drive away sleep, effeminacy, and sensuality. I traverse, from morning till night, the barren mountains, the humid valleys and the deep caverns. I walk, accompanied only by my cares, along the banks of my river. I do not meet a man to seduce me from my path; men daily become less annoying to me; for I place them either far before or much behind me. I moralize on the past, and deliberate on the future. I have found an excellent expedient to induce a separation from the world. I attach myself to the place



“ of my residence ; and I am persuaded that I  
“ could form that attachment in any place ex-  
“ cept at AVIGNON. In my present residence  
“ at VAUCLUSE, I find ATHENS, ROME, or  
“ FLORENCE, according as the manners of the  
“ one or of the other best pleases the disposition  
“ of my mind. Here I enjoy all my friends,  
“ as well those with whom I have lived, as  
“ those who have entered the vale of death  
“ before me, and whom I only know by their  
“ good works.”

When we are thus resolved, and find resources like these within our minds, Solitude enables us to accomplish whatever we please. PETRARCH, however, was not inclined to improve the opportunities which solitude afforded, because he was in love : his heart therefore was a stranger to repose ; and repose is certainly, as LAVATER has observed, the means of being always happy, and of doing every thing well.

Employment will produce content in the most frightful deserts. The Dairo of Japan banishes the grandees of the empire who incur his displeasure into the island of FATSISIO. The shores of this island, which was formerly inhabited, are of a surprising height. It has no haven, is entirely barren, and its access so difficult, that the exiles and their provisions are obliged to be landed by means of cranes. The sole employment of these unhappy men in this melancholy residence, is to manufacture silk-stuffs and gold tissues, which are so highly beautiful, that they are not suffered to be purchased by strangers. I confess, that I should not like to fall under the displeasure of the Emperor of Japan ; but I nevertheless conceive, that there is more internal



tranquility in the island of FATSISIO than in the bosoms of the Emperor and his whole court.

Every thing which conveys a spark of comfort to the soul of man, should be anxiously preserved : but, without seeking to raise an eternal flame, it is only necessary to take care that the last spark be not extinguished. It is by this means, that we acquire in the country that quietude which flies the tumults of the town, and those advantages of which the worldly-minded have no idea.

What epicure ever enjoyed so much satisfaction in the midst of all his splendid entertainments, as ROUSSEAU experienced in his frugal repasts ! “ I returned slowly home,” says he, “ my mind in some degree fatigued, but with “ a contented heart, I experience, on my return, the most agreeable relief, in resigning “ myself to the impression of objects, without “ exercising my thoughts, indulging my imagination, or doing any thing but feeling the “ peace and happiness of my situation. I find “ my cloth ready spread on my table on my “ lawn. I eat my supper with appetite in the “ company of my little family. No trace of “ servitude or dependance interrupts the love “ and kindness by which we are united : my “ dog himself is my friend, and not my slave ; “ we have always the same inclinations ; but “ he has never obeyed me. My gaiety through “ the whole evening testified that I had lived “ alone all the day : I was very different when “ I had seen company ; I was seldom contented “ with others, and never with myself ; and at “ night sat either grumbling or silent. This “ remark is my house-keeper’s ; and since she



“ mentioned it to me, I have found it invari-  
“ bly true from my own observations. At  
“ length, after having taken a few turns in my  
“ garden, or sung some air to the music of my  
“ spinnet, I experience upon my pillow a re-  
“ pose both of body and mind a hundred times  
“ more sweet than sleep itself.”

Nature and a tranquil heart are to the Divi-  
nity a more beautiful and magnificent temple  
than the church of ST. PETER at ROME, or the  
cathedral of ST. PAUL in London. The most  
savage desert is filled with the immensity of THE  
ALMIGHTY, and his presence sanctifies the soli-  
tary hill upon which a pure and peaceful heart  
offers up its sacrifice to him. He reads the  
heart of all his creatures; he every where hears  
the prayers of those whose invocations are sin-  
cere. Whether we rise, or whether we descend,  
we do not find a grain of dust that is not filled  
with his spirit. But there are no places which  
inspire ideas more religious than those happy  
scenes which, uniting the most sublime and beau-  
tiful appearances of nature, ravish the heart,  
and impress it with those voluptuous sensations  
which excite in the mind the sentiments of love,  
admiration, and repose.

I never recal to my memory without feeling  
the softest emotions, the sublime and magnifi-  
cent scene which I enjoyed in the year 1775,  
when, during a fine day, accompanied by my  
friend LAVATER, I ascended the terrace of the  
house he then inhabited, the house in which he  
was born and educated. In whatever direction  
I turned my eyes, whether walking or sitting, I  
experienced nearly the same sensation which  
BRYDONE describes himself to have felt upon



the top of *ÆTNA*\*. I included in one view the city of *ZURICH*, the smiling country which surrounds it, its tranquil and expanded lake, the high mountains, covered with frost and snow, lifting their majestic heads to Heaven. A divine tranquility surrounded me while I beheld this scene.

Upon this terrace I discovered the mystery, which enabled *LAVATER*, while he enjoyed so delicious a sensation of his existence and his powers, to walk calmly through the streets of *ZURICH*, exposed to the observations of the critics of that city, who were in the daily practice of venting their abuse against him, and of whom he so humbly asked pardon for the innocence of his life, which at least, according to the laws, they were unable to destroy.

Upon this terrace I discovered the cause of his still cherishing with such unfeigned tenderness his implacable enemies, those, learned critics of *ZURICH* whose rage the sound of his name was sufficient to excite, who felt with the greatest repugnance every thing that was praiseworthy in his character, and exposed with the highest feelings of joy these foibles and defects from which no man is entirely free, who could not listen without fury when those merits which he evidently possessed were praised, or the demerits which they were unable to prove were extenuated; who rejected with aversion all the truths which appeared to be in his favour, and eagerly listened, with an air of triumph, to all

\* *BRYDONE* says, "In proportion as we are raised above the habitations of men, all low and vulgar sentiments are left behind; and the soul, in approaching the ætherial regions, shakes off its earthly affections, and already contracts something of their invariable purity."



the calumnies which tended to his dishonour; who are humbled by his glory, as much as they can possibly be degraded by their own infamy; and who have the accomplishment of his disgrace as much at heart as their own personal advantage; in whose breasts LAVATER's happiness becomes a source of misery, and his misfortunes a fountain of joy; who affect silence on the virtues they are conscious he possesses, and loudly aggravate defects which they industriously circulate by every possible means, rather indeed to their own injury, than to his disgrace, for by these means they frequently increase the glory which they seek to extinguish; who insidiously desire the impartial stranger to see the man, and judge for himself; and have almost uniformly the mortification of perceiving that LAVATER is found to possess a character diametrically opposite to that which the envenomed tongues and pens of his enemies at ZURICH have represented.

At the village of RICHTERSWYL, a few leagues from ZURICH, in a situation still more delicious and serene than even that of LAVATER, surrounded by every object the most smiling, beautiful, and sublime that Swisserland presents, dwells a celebrated physician. His soul is as tranquil and sublime as the scene of nature which surrounds him. His habitation is the temple of health, friendship, and every peaceful virtue. The village is situated on the borders of the Lake, at a place where two projecting points of land form a natural bay of nearly half a league. On the opposite shores, the Lake, which is not quite a league in extent, is inclosed from the north to the east by pleasant hills, covered with vine leaves,



intermixed with fertile meadows, orchards, fields, groves, and thickets, with little villages, churches, villas, and cottages, scattered up and down the scene.

A wide and magnificent amphitheatre, which no artist has yet ventured to paint except in detached scenes, opens itself from the east to the south. The view towards the higher part of the Lake, which on this side is four leagues long, presents to the eye points of land, distant islands, the little town of RAPPERSWIL built on the side of a hill, the bridge of which extends itself from one side of the Lake to the other. Beyond the town, the inexhaustible valley rises in a half-circle to the sight. Upon the first ground-plot is a peak of land, with hills about half a league distant from each other; and behind these rise a range of mountains, covered with trees and verdure, and interspersed with villages and detached houses. In the back ground are discovered the fertile and majestic ALPS, twisted one among the other, and exhibiting alternate shadows of the lightest and darkest azure. Behind these ALPS, rocks, covered with eternal snows, rear their heads to the clouds. Towards the south, the opening of the amphitheatre is continued by a new chain of mountains. A scene thus enriched always appears new, romantic, and incomparable.

The mountains extend themselves from the south to the west: the village of RICHTERSWYL is situated at their feet upon the banks of the Lake: deep forests of firs cover the summit, and the middle is filled with fruit trees, interspersed with rich fallows and fertile pastures, among which, at certain distances, a few houses are



scattered. The village itself is neat, the streets are paved, and the houses, built of stone, are painted on the outsides. Around the village are walks formed on the banks of the Lake, or cut through shady forests to the hills; and on every side scenes, beautiful or sublime, strike the eye while they ravish the heart of the admiring traveller. He stops, and contemplates with eager joy these accumulated beauties; his bosom swells with excess of pleasure; and his breath continues for a time suspended, as if fearful of interrupting the fulness of his delight. Every acre of this charming country is in the highest degree of cultivation and improvment. No part of it is suffered to lie untilled; every hand is at work; and men, women, and children, from infancy to age, are all usefully employed.

The two houses of the physician are each of them surrounded by a garden; and, although situated in the middle of the village, are as rural and sequestered as if they had been built in the heart of the country. Through the gardens, and in view of the chamber of my dear friend, flows a limpid stream, on the opposite side of which is the great road, where, during a succession of ages, a crowd of pilgrims have almost daily passed in their way to the convent of THE HERMITAGE. From these houses and gardens, at about the distance of a league, you behold, towards the south, the majestic EZEBERG rear its head: black forests conceal its top; while below, on the declivity of the hill, hangs a village with a beautiful church, on the steeple of which the sun suspends its departing rays every evening before his course is finished. In the front is the Lake of ZURICH, whose unruffled waters are



secured from the violence of tempests, and whose transparent surface reflects the beauties of its delightful banks.

During the silence of night, if you repair to the chamber-window, or indulge in a lonely walk through the gardens, to taste the refreshing scents which exhale from the surrounding flowers, while the moon, rising above the mountains, reflects on the expanse of the Lake a broad beam of light ; you hear, during this awful sleep of nature, the sound of the village-clocks echoing from the opposite shores ; and on the *Richterswyl* side the shrill proclamations of the watchmen, blended with the barkings of the faithful dog. At a distance, you hear the little boats softly gliding down the stream, dividing the water with their oars ; you perceive them cross the moon's translucent beam, and play among the sparkling waves. On viewing the Lake of GENEVA in its full extent, the majesty of such a sublime picture strikes the spectator dumb ; he thinks that he has discovered the *chef d'œuvre* of creation ; but here, near the Lake of ZURICH at RICHTERSWYL, the objects, being upon a small scale, are more soft, agreeable, and touching.

Riches and luxury are no where to be seen in the habitation of this philanthropist. You are there seated upon matted chairs. He writes upon tables worked from the wood of the country ; and he and his friends eat on earthen plates. Neatness and convenience reign throughout.— Large collections of drawings, paintings, and engravings, are his sole expence. The first beams of Aurora light the little chamber where this philosophic sage sleeps in peaceful repose, and opens his eyes to every new day. Rising from



his bed, he is saluted by the cooings of the turtle doves, and the morning song of birds who sleep with him in an adjoining chamber.

The first hour of the morning, and the last at night, are sacred to himself; but he devotes all the intermediate hours of the day to the assistance of a deceased and afflicted multitude, who daily attend him for advice and assistance. The benevolent exercise of his profession engrosses every moment of his life, but it also constitutes his happiness and joy. All the inhabitants of the mountains of SWISSERLAND, as well as of the vallies of the ALPS, resort to his house, and vainly seek for language to express the grateful feelings of their hearts. They are persuaded that the Doctor sees and knows every thing; they answer his questions with frankness and fidelity; they listen to his words, treasure up his advice like grains of gold, and leave him with more regret, consolation, hope, and virtuous resolution, than they quit their confessors at THE HERMITAGE. After a day spent in this manner, can it be imagined that any thing is wanting to complete the happiness of this friend of mankind? Yes; when a simple and ingenuous female, who had trembled with fear for the safety of her beloved husband, enters his chamber, and, seizing him fondly by the hand, exclaims, "My husband, Sir, was very ill when first I came to you; but in the space of two days he quite recovered. Oh, my dear Sir, I am under the greatest obligations to you." This philanthropic character feels that which ought to fill the bosom of a monarch in the moment when he confers happiness on his people,



OF this description is the country of SWISSERLAND, where DOCTOR HOTZE, the ablest physician of the present age, resides; a physician and philosopher, whose pervading genius, profound judgment, and great experience, have placed him with TISSOT HIXZEL, the dearest friends of my heart. It is in this manner he passes the hours of his life; all uniform, and all of them happy: he reserves, indeed, only two hours of each day to himself, and devotes the rest to the relief of the unfortunate, who daily visit him in this celestial region. His mind, active and full of vigour, never seeks repose; but there is a divine quietude dwells within his heart. Alas! there are no such characters to be found in a Court. Individuals, however, of every description have it in their power to taste an equal degree of happiness, although they may not have the opportunity of residing amidst scenes so delightful as those which the situation of my beloved HOTZE at RICHTERSWYL, the Convent of Capuchins near ALBANO, or the mansion of my sovereign at WINDSOR, affords.

The man who does not ask for more enjoyments than he possesses is completely happy. Such a felicity is easily found at RICHTERSWYL, upon the banks of the Lake of ZURICH; but it may be also more easily found than is in general imagined, even in such a chamber as that in which I am now writing this Treatise upon Solitude, where, during seven years, I had nothing to look at but some broken tiles and a vane upon the spire of an old church.

CONTENT must always derive its source from the heart; and in Solitude the bosom dilates more easily to receive it, with all the virtues by



which it is accompanied. How good, how affectionate does the heart become on the border of a clear spring, or in the enjoyment of a calm repose, under the shades of a branching pine! In Solitude the tranquility of nature glides into the heart; but in Society we find much more occasion to fly from ourselves than from others. To be at peace with ourselves, we must be in concord with all mankind. While the heart is tranquil, the mind considers men and things in the most favourable and pleasing point of view. In rural retirements, where it is open only to agreeable sensations; we learn to love our fellow-creatures. While all nature smiles around us, and our souls overflow with benevolence, we wish for more hearts than one to participate in our happiness.

By mild and peaceful dispositions, therefore, the felicities of domestic life are relished in a much higher degree in rural retirement, than in any other situation whatever. The most splendid courts in Europe afford no joys equal to these; and their vain pleasures can never assuage the justifiable grief of him who, contrary to his inclination, feels himself torn from such a felicity, dragged into the palaces of kings, and obliged to conform to the frivolous life practised there, where people do nothing but game and yawn, and among whom the reciprocal communication of languors, hatred, envy, flattery and calumny alone prevails.\*

\* MADAME DE MAINTENON wrote from Marli to MADAME DE CAYLUS, "We pass our lives here in a very singular manner. Wit, gallantry, and cheerfulness should prevail; but of all these qualities, we are totally destitute, we game, yawn, fatigue ourselves, reciprocally receive and communicate vexations, hate, envy, carcs, and calumniate each other."



It is in rural life alone that true pleasures, the love, the honour, and the chaste manners of ancient days are revived. ROUSSEAU, therefore, says with great truth to the inhabitants of cities, that the country affords pleasures which they do not even suspect; that these pleasures are less insipid, less unpolished than they conceive; that taste, variety, and delicacy may be enjoyed there; that a man of merit, who retires with his family into the country, and turns farmer, will find his days pass as pleasantly as in the most brilliant assemblies; that a good housewife in the country may also be a charming woman, a woman adorned with every agreeable qualification, and possess graces much more captivating than all those prim and affected females whom we see in towns.

The mind under refreshing shades, in agreeable vallies, and delightful retreats, forgets all the unpleasant circumstances it encountered in the world. The most profligate and wicked characters are no longer remembered in society, when they are no longer seen. It is only in the tumultuous scenes of civil life, and under the heavy yoke of subordination, that the continual shock of reason and good-sense, against the stupidity of those who govern, spreads a torrent of miseries over human life. Fools in power render the lives of their inferiors bitter, poison their pleasures, overturn all social order, spread thorns in the path of those who have more understanding than themselves, and make this world a vale of discouragement, indignation, and tears. Oh! that men of honour at court brave and skilful generals, able agents, should have a right to exclaim with the philosopher, "Had I but the



“ wings of a dove, that I might fly where my  
 “ inclination leads me, and fix my dwelling as  
 “ chance might direct, I would taste a distant  
 “ flight, and continue in the desert ! I would  
 “ hasten to escape from the tempest ; for I per-  
 “ ceive hypocrisy, malice, falsehood, and disease  
 “ prevail at court, in the army, and in the city.”

Stupidity when it has gained credit and authority becomes more dangerous and hurtful than any other quality ; it always inclines to render every thing as little as itself, gives to every thing a false name, and mistakes every character for the opposite to what it really is ; in a word, stupidity always calls white black, and black white. Men of frank, honest liberal dispositions, therefore, if they would escape from his persecution, must learn all his tricks and all his turnings, as well as the fox of SAADI the Indian fabulist.

A person one day observing a fox running with great speed towards his hole, called out to him,  
 “ Reynard ? where are you running in so great a  
 “ hurry ? Have you done any mischief for which  
 “ you are fearful of being punished ?”—“ No  
 “ Sir,” replied the fox, “ my conscience is clear,  
 “ and does not reproach me with any thing ; but  
 “ I have just over-heard the hunters wish that  
 “ they had a camel to hunt this morning.”—  
 “ Well, but how does that concern you ? You  
 “ are not a camel.”—“ Oh ! Sir,” replied the  
 fox, “ sagacious heads always have enemies. If  
 “ any one should point me out to the huntsmen,  
 “ and say, “ There runs a CAMEL,” those gen-  
 “ tlemen would immediately seize me, and load  
 “ me with chains, without once enquiring whe-  
 “ ther I was in fact the kind of animal the in-  
 “ former had described me to be.”



REYNARD was perfectly right in his observation: but it is lamentable that men should be wicked in proportion as they are stupid, or that they should be wicked only because they are envious. If I should ever become the object of their wrath, because they conceived that I enjoyed more happiness than themselves, and it were impossible for me to escape from their persecutions, I would only revenge myself by letting them perceive that no man living is to me an object of scandal.

Nothing can wound the self-love of that breast which feels no desire for more than it possesses. The calm temper which results from a life simple, regular, and serene, guards the heart against the excess of desire. By living in continual communion with ourselves, we unavoidably perceive how deficient we are in many of those qualifications, which, in the opinion of others, we are supposed to possess; the advantages we gain, as well as all the happiness we feel, appear in consequence to be the effect of favours conferred on us. This reason alone renders it impossible that we should repine at the happiness of another; for candour will force a man who lives continually by himself, and acts with sincerity of heart, to reflect upon his own defects, and to do justice to the superior merit of other men.

“I should wish to end my days in the delightful Solitudes of LAUSANNE,” says a French historian of that province, “far retired from the tumultuous scenes of the world, from avarice, and from deceit; in those Solitudes, were a thousand innocent pleasures are enjoyed and renewed without end: there



“ we escape from profligate discourse, from un-  
“ meaning chatter, from envy, detraction, and  
“ jealousy. Upon those smiling plains, the ex-  
“ tent of which the astonished eye is incapable  
“ of measuring, it is impossible to see, without  
“ admiring the goodness of the Divine Creator;  
“ so many different animals wandering peaceably  
“ among each other; so many birds making the  
“ woods re-echo to their songs; so many won-  
“ ders of nature, which invite the mind to silent  
“ contemplation.”

It appears to me, that to whatever place in Germany you turn your eyes, you find in every peaceful family, as in the Solitudes of LAUSANNE, more pure and genuine pleasures than are ever seen in fashionable life. The industrious citizen who returns in the evening to his wife and children, after having honourably performed the labours of the day, is without doubt as contented as any courtier. If the voice of the public and his fellow-citizens do not render to a man of business the justice, esteem, and honour, which his character merits; if his zeal and good works meet with neglect, and are treated with ingratitude and contempt; his mind will soon forget the injustice, when he returns to the bosom of his happy family, sees their arms open ready to receive him, and obtains from them the praise and approbation which he truly merits. With what delight his heart feels the value of their fondness and affection! If the eclat of fashionable life, the splendour of courts, the triumph of power and grandeur, have left his bosom cold and comfortless; if the base practices of fraud, falsehood, hypocrisy, and puerile vanities, have irritated and soured his



mind ; he no sooner mixes in the circle of those whom he cherishes, than a genial warmth re-animates his dejected heart, the tenderest sentiments inspire his soul with courage, and the truth, freedom, probity, and innocence by which he is surrounded, reconcile him to the lot of humanity. If, on the contrary, he should enjoy a more brilliant situation, be the favourite of a minister, the companion of the great, loved by the women, and admired in every public place as the leader of the fashion ; should his station be high, and his fortunes rich, but his dwelling prove the seat of discord and jealousy, and the bosom of his family a stranger to that peace which the wise and virtuous taste under a roof of thatch, would all these dazzling pleasures compensate for this irreparable loss ?

These are my sentiments on the advantages which Solitude possesses to reconcile us to the lot of humanity and the practices of the world ; but I shall here only cite the words of another ; the words of a Doctor of Divinity of the same tenets with myself ; a judicious theologian, who does not inculcate imperious doctrines, or propagate a religion which offends the heart. They are the words of his sermon upon Domestic Happiness, of that incomparable discourse which men of every description ought to read, as well as all the other sermons of ZOLLIKOFER.

“ Solitude,” says this divine, “ secures us  
 “ from the aspersions of light and frivolous  
 “ minds ; from the unjust contempt and harsh  
 “ judgment of the envious ; preserves us from  
 “ the afflicting spectacle of follies, crimes, and  
 “ misery, which so frequently disgraces the  
 “ theatre of active and social life ; extinguishes



“ the fire of those passions which are too lively  
 “ and ardent; and establishes peace in our hearts.”

These are the sentiments of my beloved ZOL-  
 LIKOFER; the truth of which I have expe-  
 rienced. When my enemies conceived that ac-  
 cidents however trifling would trouble my re-  
 pose; when I was told with what satisfaction  
 the *Coteries* would hear of my distress, that *les*  
*belles dames* would leap for joy, and form a clus-  
 ter round the man who detailed the injuries I had  
 received, and those which were yet in store for  
 me. I said to myself, “ Although my enemies  
 “ should have sworn to afflict me with a thou-  
 “ sand deaths, what harm can they really do  
 “ me? What can epigrams and pleasantries  
 “ prove? What sting do these satirical engrav-  
 “ ings carry, which I have taken the pains to  
 “ circulate through every part of SWISSERLAND  
 “ and GERMANY?”

The thorns over which the steady foot walks  
 unhurt, or kicks from beneath it with contempt,  
 inflict wounds and ulcers only upon effeminate  
 minds, who feel *that* as a serious injury which  
 others think nothing of. Characters of this de-  
 scription require to be treated, like the flowers  
 of young plants, with delicacy and attention,  
 and cannot bear the touch of rude and violent  
 hands. But he who has exercised his powers  
 in the greatest dangers, and has combated with  
 adversity, who feels his soul superior to the false  
 opinions and prejudices of the world, neither sees  
 nor feels the blow, he resigns trifles to the nar-  
 row minds which they occupy, and looks down  
 with courage and contempt upon the vain boast-  
 ings of such miserable insects.

To forget the fury of our enemies, the assist-  
 ance of soft zephyrs, clear springs, well stored



rivers, thick forests, refreshing grottos, verdant banks, or fields adorned with flowers, is not always necessary. Oh! how soon, in the tranquility of retirement, every antipathy is obliterated! All the little crosses of life, all the obloquies, every injustice, every low and trifling care, vanish like smoke before him who has courage to live according to his own taste and inclination. That which we do voluntarily is always more agreeable than that which we do by compulsion. The restraints of the world, and the slavery of society, alone can poison the pleasures of free minds, deprive them of every satisfaction, content and power, even when placed in a sphere of elegance, easy in fortune, and surrounded by abundance.

Solitude, therefore, not only brings quietude to the heart, renders it kind and virtuous, and raises it above the malevolence of envy, wickedness, and stupidity, but affords advantages still more valuable. Liberty, true liberty, is nowhere so easily found as in a distant retirement from the tumults of men and every forced connection with the world. It has been truly said, that in Solitude MAN recovers from that distraction which had torn him from himself; that he feels in his mind a clear and intimate knowledge of what he was, and of what he had been; that he lives more within himself and for himself than in external objects; that he enters into the state of nature and freedom; no longer plays an artificial part, no longer represents a different personage, but thinks, speaks, and acts according to his proper character and sentiments; that he discovers the whole extent of his nature, and does not act beyond it; that he no longer dreads



a severe master, an imperious tyrant ; that he ridicules no one, and is himself proof against the shafts of calumny ; that neither the constraints of business nor the ceremonies of fashion disquiet his mind, but, breaking through the shackles of servile habit and arbitrary custom, he thinks with confidence and courage, and the sensibilities of his heart resign themselves to the sentiments of his mind.

MADAME DE STAAL considered it as a great and vulgar error to suppose that freedom and liberty could be enjoyed at court ; where, even in the most minute actions of our lives, we are obliged to observe so many different things ; where it is impossible to think aloud ; where our sentiments must be regulated by the circumstances of those around us ; where every person we approach seems to possess the right of scrutinizing our characters ; and where we never have the smallest enjoyment of ourselves. “ The enjoyment of oneself,” says she, “ can only be found in Solitude. It was within the walls of the BASILE that I first became acquainted with myself.”

Men of liberal minds are as ill qualified by nature to be Chamberlains, and at the head of the etiquette of a court, as women are to be *religieuses*. The courtier is fearful of every thing he sees, is always upon the watch, incessantly tormented by an everlasting suspicion ; yet notwithstanding all this, he must preserve the face of serenity and satisfaction ; and, like that old woman, he always lights one taper to Michael the Archangel and another to the Devil, because he does not know for which of them he may have the most occasion.



Such precautions and constraints are insupportable to every man who is not formed by nature for a courtier. In situations therefore less connected with the world, men of liberal minds, sound understandings, and active dispositions, break all the chains by which they are withheld. To find any pleasure in the fumes of fashion, it is necessary to have been trained up in the habits of a court. The defect of judgment which reigns in courts, without doubt magnifies the most trifling details into matters of high importance; and the long constraint which the soul there endures, makes many things appear easy to a courtier which, for want of habit, would carry torment to the bosom of another. Who has not experienced what it is to be forced to remain fixed upon one's chair, and to talk a whole evening, even in common society, without knowing on what subject to converse, and of course without being able to say any thing? Who has not occasionally found himself in company with those who willingly listen to sensible conversation, but never contribute a single idea to the promotion of it themselves? Who has not seen his thoughts fall upon a mind so barren, that they produce no return; and slide through the ears of his auditors like water upon oil-cloth?

How many men of contemplative minds are the slaves of fools and madmen! How many rational beings pass their lives in bondage, by being unfortunately attached to a worthless faction! How many men of excellent understandings are condemned to perform a pitiful part in many provincial towns! The company of a man who laughs at every thing that is honourable, and rejects those sentiments which lead to love:



and esteem, soon becomes insupportable. There are no worse tyrants than the prejudices of mankind, and the servitude of liberal minds becomes more weighty in proportion to the public ignorance. To form a serious thought of pleasing in public life is vain; for to succeed in such an endeavour, we must sacrifice all thought, give up every real sentiment of the soul, despise every thing which rational minds esteem, and esteem every thing that a man of understanding and good sense despises, or else, by blindly dashing forward upon all occasions, hazard content, tranquillity, and fortune.

A rural residence, or a tranquil and domestic life in town, will secure us from these constraints, and is the only means of rendering us free and independent of those situations which are hostile to the mind, and repugnant to good sense. But if Solitude ought to be free from constraint, we must neither take the habit of monachism, nor, like the Doge of Venice, wear the diadem of sovereignty. This abject slave cannot visit a friend, nor receive a foreign ambassador, without a special permission from the Senate for the purpose. He is indeed so wretched, that every one is compelled to acknowledge that Solitude and dependence are the highest prerogatives of his crown.

The soul, when neither clogged nor withheld nor tormented by surrounding objects, becomes sensible, in Solitude, of its powers, and attains a clear and intimate knowledge of its present state, and of what it is able to perform. Liberty and leisure, therefore, always render a rational and active mind indifferent to every other kind of happiness.



Solitude and the love of liberty rendered all the pleasures of the world odious to the mind of PETRARCH. In his old age he was solicited to officiate as Secretary to different Popes, at whatever salary he thought proper to fix; and indeed every inducement that emolument could afford, was insidiously made use of to turn his views that way. But PETRARCH replied, "Riches acquired at the expence of liberty are the cause of real misery: a yoke made of gold or silver, is not less oppressive than if made of wood or lead." He represented to his patrons and friends, that he could not persuade himself to give up his liberty and his leisure, because, in his opinion, the world afforded no wealth of equal value; that he could not renounce the pleasures of science; that he had despised riches at a time when he was most in need of them, and it would be shameful to seek them now, when it was more easy for him to do without them; that he should apportion the provision for his journey according to the distance he had to travel; and that having almost reached the end of his course, he ought to think more of his reception at the inn than of his expences on the road.

A distaste of the manners of a Court led PETRARCH into Solitude when he was only three and twenty years of age, although in his outward appearance, in his attention to dress, and even in his constitution, he possessed every thing that could be expected from a complete courtier. He was in every respect formed to please: the beauty of his figure caused people to stop in the street, and point him out as he walked along. His eyes were bright, and full of fire;



and his lively countenance proclaimed the vivacity of his mind. The freshest colour adorned his cheeks; his features were distinct and manly; his shape fine and elegant; his person tall, and his presence noble. The genial climate of *Avignon* increased the warmth of his constitution. The fire of youth, the beauty of so many women assembled at the Court of the Pope from every nation in Europe, and above all the dissolute manners of the Court, led him, very early in life, into connexions with women. A great portion of the day was spent at his toilette in the decorations of dress. His habit was always white, and the least spot or an improper fold gave his mind the greatest uneasiness. Even in the fashion of his shoes he avoided every form that appeared to him inelegant; they were extremely tight, and cramped his feet to such a degree, that it would in a short time have been impossible for him to walk, if he had not recollected that it was much better to shock the eyes of the ladies than to make himself a cripple. In walking through the streets, he endeavoured to avoid the rudeness of the wind by every possible means; not that he was afraid of taking cold, but because he was fearful that the dress of his hair might be deranged. A love, however, much more elevated and ardent for virtue and the *belles lettres*, always counterbalanced his devotion to the fair sex. In truth, to express his passion for the sex, he wrote all his poetry in Italian, and only used the learned languages upon serious and important subjects. But notwithstanding the warmth of his constitution, he was always chaste. He held all debauchery in the utmost detestation; repentance and disgust im-



immediately seized his mind upon the slightest indulgence with the sex; and he often regretted the sensibility of his feelings; "I should like," said he, "to have a heart as hard as adamant, rather than be so continually tormented by such seducing passions." Among the number of fine women, however, who adorned the Court at *Avignon*, there were some who endeavoured to captivate the heart of PETRARCH. Seduced by their charms, and drawn aside by the facility with which he obtained the happiness of their company, he became upon closer acquaintance obedient to all their wishes; but the inquietudes and torments of LOVE so much alarmed his mind, that he endeavoured to shun her toils. Before his acquaintance with LAURA, he was wilder than a stag; but, if tradition is to be believed, he had not, at the age of thirty-five, any occasion to reproach himself with misconduct. The fear of God, the idea of death, the love of virtue, the principles of religion, the fruits of the education he received from his mother, preserved him from the numerous dangers by which he was surrounded. The practice of the Civil Law was at this period the only road to eminence at the Court of the Pope; but PETRARCH held the Law in detestation, and reprobated this venal trade. Previous to devoting himself to the Church, he exercised for some time the profession of an advocate, and gained many causes; but he reproached himself with it afterwards. "In my youth," says he, "I devoted myself to the trade of selling words, or rather of telling lies; but that which we do against our inclinations, is seldom attended with success. My fondness was for Solitude,



“ and I therefore attended the practice of the  
“ bar with the greater detestation.” The se-  
cret consciousness which PETRARCH entertain-  
ed of his own merit, gave him, it is true, all  
the vain confidence of youth; and filled his  
mind with that lofty spirit which begets the pre-  
sumption of being equal to every thing; but  
his inveterate hatred of the manners of the  
Court impeded his exertions. “ I have no  
“ hope,” said he, in the thirty-fifth year of his  
age, “ of making my fortune in the Court of  
“ the Vicar of JESUS CHRIST: to accomplish  
“ that, I must assiduously visit the palaces of  
“ the great; I must flatter, lie, and deceive.”  
PETRARCH was not capable of doing this. He  
neither hated men nor disliked advancement,  
but he detested the means that he must necessa-  
rily use to attain it. He loved glory, and ar-  
dently sought it, though not by the ways in  
which it is generally obtained. He delighted to  
walk in the most unfrequented paths, and, in  
consequence, he renounced THE WORLD.

The aversion which PETRARCH felt from the  
manners which are peculiar to Courts was the  
particular occasion of his Essay upon Solitude.  
In the year 1346 he was, as usual, dur-  
ing *Lent* at *Vaucluse*. THE BISHOP OF CAVIL-  
LON, anxious to enter into conversation with  
him, and to taste the fruits of Solitude, fixed  
his residence at his castle, which is situated up-  
on the summit of a high rock, and appears to  
be constructed more for the habitation of birds  
than men; at present the ruins of it only re-  
main to be seen. All that the BISHOP and PE-  
TRARCH had seen at *Avignon* and *Naples* had  
inspired them with disgust of residence in cities,



and the highest contempt for the manners of a Court. They weighed all the unpleasant circumstances they had before experienced, and opposed the situations which produced them to the advantage of Solitudes. This was the usual subject of their conversation at the castle, and that which gave birth in the mind of PETRARCH to the resolution of exploring, and uniting into one work, all his own ideas and those of others upon this delightful subject. This work was begun in *Lent* and finished at *Easter*, but he revised and corrected it afterwards, making many alterations, and adding every thing which occurred to his mind previous to the publication. It was not till the year 1366, twenty years afterwards, that he sent it to the BISHOP OF CAVAILLON, to whom it was dedicated.

If all that I have said of PETRARCH in the course of this work, were to be collected into one point of view, it would be seen what very important sacrifices he made to Solitude. But his mind and his heart were framed to enjoy the advantages it affords with a degree of delight superior to that in which any other person could have enjoyed them, and all this happiness he obtained from this disgust to a court and from his love of liberty.

The love of liberty was also the cause of ROUSSEAU'S feeling so violent a disgust for Society, and in Solitude became the source of all his pleasures. His Letters to M. DE MALHERBE are as remarkable for the information they afford of the true genius of the writer, as are his CONFESSIONS ; which have not been better understood than his character. He writes in one



of them, “ I mistook for a great length of time  
“ the cause of that invincible disgust which I  
“ have always felt in the commerce of the  
“ world. I attributed it to the mortification of  
“ not possessing that quick and ready talent ne-  
“ cessary to discover in conversation the little  
“ knowledge which I possessed ; and this beat  
“ back an idea that I did not occupy that sta-  
“ tion in the opinion of mankind which I con-  
“ ceived I merited. But after having scribbled  
“ a great quantity of paper, I was perfectly  
“ convinced, that even in saying ridiculous  
“ things I was in no danger of being taken for  
“ a fool. When I perceived myself sought af-  
“ ter by all the world, and honoured with  
“ much more consideration than even my own  
“ ridiculous vanity would have ventured to ex-  
“ pect ; and that, notwithstanding this, I felt  
“ the same disgust rather augmented than dimi-  
“ nished ; I concluded that it must arise from  
“ some other cause, and that these were not the  
“ kind of enjoyments for which I must look.  
“ What then, in fact, is the cause of it ? It is  
“ no other than that invincible spirit of liberty  
“ which nothing can overcome, and in com-  
“ parison with which honour, fortune and even  
“ fame itself, are to me nothing. It is certain,  
“ that this spirit of liberty is less engendered by  
“ pride than by indolence ; but this indolence  
“ is incredible ; it is alarmed at every thing ; it  
“ renders the most trifling duties of civil life  
“ insupportable : to be obliged to speak a word,  
“ to write a letter, or to pay a visit, are to me,  
“ from the moment the obligation arises, the  
“ severest punishments. This is the reason,  
“ why, although the ordinary commerce of



“ men is odious to me, the pleasures of private  
 “ friendship are so dear to my heart ; for in the  
 “ indulgence of private friendships there are no  
 “ duties to perform, we have only to follow the  
 “ feelings of the heart, and all is done. This  
 “ is the reason also why I have so much dreaded  
 “ to accept of favours ; for every act of kind-  
 “ ness demands an acknowledgement ; and I  
 “ feel that my heart is ungrateful, only because  
 “ gratitude becomes a duty. The kind of hap-  
 “ piness, in short, which pleases me best, does  
 “ not consist so much in doing what I wish, as  
 “ in avoiding that which is repugnant to my  
 “ inclination. Active life affords no temptati-  
 “ ons to me ; I would a hundred times rather  
 “ do nothing at all, than that which I dislike ;  
 “ and I have frequently thought, that I should  
 “ not have lived very unhappily even in THE  
 “ BASTILE, provided I was free from every  
 “ other constraint than that of merely residing  
 “ within its walls.”

The advantages of a tranquil leisure were ne-  
 ver felt with higher delight than by ROUSSEAU ;  
 these enjoyments however are equally within the  
 reach of every individual. “ When my tor-  
 “ ments,” says this amiable philosopher, “ oblige  
 “ me to count the long and sorrowful progress  
 “ of the night, and the violence of my fever  
 “ prevents me from enjoying one moment’s  
 “ sleep, I frequently forget my present condi-  
 “ tion in reflecting on the various events of my  
 “ life, and recollection, repentance, regret, and  
 “ pity divide those attentions in which I bury,  
 “ for a few moments, all my sufferings. What  
 “ situations do you conceive, Sir, I most fre-  
 “ quently and most cheerfully recall to my mind  
 “ in these meditations ? Not the pleasures of my



“ youth ; they were too few, too much blended  
“ with bitterness, and are now too distant from  
“ my thoughts ; but the pleasures of my retire-  
“ ment, my solitary walks, the transient though  
“ delicious days which I have passed entirely  
“ with myself, with my good old housekeeper,  
“ my faithful well-beloved dog, my old cat, the  
“ birds of the fields, and the beasts of the fo-  
“ rests, surrounded by all the charms of nature,  
“ and filled with their divine and incomprehen-  
“ sible Author. Repairing before it was light  
“ to my garden, to see and contemplate the ri-  
“ sing sun, when I discovered the symptoms of  
“ a fine day, my first prayer was, that neither  
“ messages nor visitors might arrive to disturb  
“ the charm. After having devoted the morn-  
“ ing to various cares, which as I could put  
“ them off till another time I always attended  
“ to with pleasure, I hastened to my dinner  
“ that I might avoid unpleasant visitors, and  
“ thereby procure a longer afternoon. Before  
“ one o'clock, even in the hottest days of sum-  
“ mer, while the sun shone in meridian splen-  
“ dour, I walked forth with my faithful ACHA-  
“ TES, hurrying along, fearful lest some one  
“ might seize hold of me before I was secure in  
“ my escape ; but when I had once turned a  
“ certain corner, and felt myself free from dan-  
“ ger, with what palpitation of heart, with  
“ what lively joy I drew my breath, and ex-  
“ claimed, *Now I am master of my time for the*  
“ *remainder of the day !* I then walked with tran-  
“ quil steps in search of some wild sequestered  
“ spot in the forest, some desert place, where  
“ no object, touched by the hands of men, an-  
“ nounced servitude and domination ; some  
“ asylum, into which I might fancy that I alone  
“ had first entered, and where no impertinent



“ intruder might interpose between nature and  
 “ myself.”

Who would not willingly renounce the dissipations of the world for these calm enjoyments of the heart ! the splendid slavery of society for this inestimable liberty ! I am perfectly aware, that mankind in general are not in a situation so favourable to self-enjoyment ; only let them try, however, the pure pleasures of the country, and they will find that one day of liberty, one hour of quiet, will effectually cure them of their anxiety for feasts, shows, finery, and all the noisy rendezvous of fashion and folly.

POPE CLEMENT the Sixth offered to PETRARCH, beside the office of Apostolic Secretary, many considerable bishoprics. PETRARCH constantly refused them. “ You will not accept of  
 “ any thing that I offer to you !” said the Holy Father. “ Ask of me what you please.” Two months afterwards PETRARCH wrote to one of his friends, “ Every degree of elevation creates  
 “ new suspicions in my mind, because I perceive  
 “ the misfortunes that attend it. Would they  
 “ but grant me that happy mediocrity so preferable to gold, and which they have promised  
 “ me, I should accept the gift with gratitude and  
 “ cordiality ; but if they only intend to invest me  
 “ with some important employment, I shall refuse it. I will shake off the yoke ; for I had  
 “ much rather live poor than become a slave.”

An Englishman somewhere asks, “ Why are  
 “ the inhabitants of the rich plains of LOMBARDY, where nature pours her gifts in such  
 “ profusion, less opulent than those of the mountains of SWISSERLAND ? Because FREEDOM,  
 “ whose influence is more benign than sunshine



“ and zephyrs, who covers the rugged rock with  
 “ soil, drains the sickly swamp, and cloaths the  
 “ brown heath in verdure; who dresses the la-  
 “ bourer's face with smiles, and makes, him be-  
 “ hold his encreasing family with delight and ex-  
 “ ultation; FREEDOM has abandoned the fertile  
 “ fields of LOMBARDY, and dwells among the  
 “ mountains of SWISSERLAND.”

This is the warm enthusiasm of poetry; but it is literally true at Uri, Schwitz, Unedvald, Zug, Glaris, and Appenzel. For he who has more than his wants require is RICH; and whoever is enabled to think, to speak, and to employ himself as his inclination may direct, is FREE.

Competency and liberty, therefore, are the true sweeteners of life. That state of mind, so rarely possessed, in which we can sincerely say, “ *I have enough,*” in the highest attachment of philosophy. Happiness consists not in having too much, but sufficient. Kings and princes are unhappy, because they always desire more than they possess, and are continually stimulated to accomplish more than it is within their power to attain. The greatest and the best of kings are therefore not to blame, if they sometimes say, “ *My son, I am deaf to-day on my left ear.*”

Men are ordinarily inclined to appear much happier than in fact they are; and they consider every thing which detracts from this appearance as a real misfortune. But if you are happy by any means whatsoever, conduct yourself so that nobody shall know it except your most intimate friends. Conceal all the feelings you possess; hide all that you enjoy; for ENVY is ever watchful to find its way into the bosom of tranquility and will soon destroy its serenity.



He who only wants little has always enough.  
“ I am contented,” says PETRARCH, in a letter  
to his friends, the Cardinals TALEYRAND and  
BOLOGNA, “ I desire nothing more. I have  
“ placed limits to my desires. I enjoy every  
“ thing that is necessary to life. CINCINNATUS,  
“ CURIUS, FABRICIUS, REGULUS, after hav-  
“ ing conquered nations, and led kings in tri-  
“ umph, were not so rich as I am. But I should  
“ always be poor, if I were to open a door to  
“ my passions. Luxury, ambition, avarice,  
“ know no bounds; and desire is a fathomless  
“ abyss. I have cloaths to cover me; victuals  
“ to support me; horses to carry me; lands to  
“ lie down or walk upon while I am alive, and  
“ to receive my remains when dead. What  
“ more was any Roman Emperor possessed of?  
“ My body is healthy; and the flesh subdued by  
“ labour is less rebellious against the spirit. I  
“ have books of every kind, which to me are  
“ an inestimable treasure; they fill my soul with  
“ a voluptuous delight which is never tinged  
“ with remorse. I have friends whom I consider  
“ more precious than any thing I possess, pro-  
“ vided their counsels do not tend to deprive me  
“ of my liberty. I know of no other enemies  
“ than those which envy has raised against me.  
“ I despise them from the bottom of my heart;  
“ and perhaps it would be unhappy for me if  
“ they were not my enemies. I still reckon  
“ among my riches the love and kindness of all  
“ the good men who are upon earth, even those  
“ whom I have never seen, and perhaps never  
“ shall see.”



From this passage we discover that envy followed PETRARCH into the retreats of Solitude. He frequently complains of it ; but in this letter he treats it with propriety. He despises his envious enemies, and would be sorry if he were without them.

SOLITUDE discovers to mankind their real wants. Where great simplicity of manners prevails, men always possess sufficient for the enjoyment of life. If I neither see nor know the things which you have or desire to possess, I cannot entertain even an idea of any good which they can possibly produce. An old Country Curate residing upon a lofty mountain near the Lake of THUN, in the Canton of BERN, was one day presented with a *moor-cock*. The good man was ignorant of the rarity he had received, and consulted with his cook what he should do with it. The pastor and the cook agreed to bury it in the ground. Alas ! were we all as ignorant of *moor-cocks*, we should all be as happy as the Curate of the mountain near the Lake of THUN.

He who places limits to his real wants is more wise, more rich, and more contented than us all. The system upon which he acts partakes of the noble simplicity of his mind. He finds felicity in the most obscure life, in situations at the greatest distance from the world. Truth and simplicity are the only objects of his affection ; he follows that philosophy which requires but little, has few wants, and seeks his highest happiness in a contented mind.



POPE, when only twelve years of age, wrote an affecting and agreeable little Ode upon the subject of Solitude, which comprehends the very essence of this philosophy.

*O D E O N S O L I T U D E.*

*HAPPY the man whose wish and care  
A few paternal acres bound,  
Content to breathe his native air,  
In his own ground.*

*Whose herds with milk, whose fields with bread,  
Whose flocks supply him with attire,  
Whose trees in summer yield him shade,  
In winter, fire.*

*Blest, who can unconcern'dly find,  
Hours, days, and years slide soft away,  
In health of body, peace of mind,  
Quiet by day.*

*Sound sleep by night ; study and ease,  
Together mixed ; sweet recreation !  
And innocence, which most does please  
With meditation.*

*Thus let me live unseen, unknown,  
Thus unlamented let me die,  
Steal from the world, and not a stone  
Tell where I lie.*

To those who love a calm and tranquil life, the scenes of sensuality become more simple, peaceful, and less alarming ; to the worldly-minded this field is full of barren dreary places ; of noise and tumult ; vineyards and banqueting-houses, wanton dancings and infirmaries ; tombs upon which the roses fade, and dark shades in



which lovers meet. But to the mind of him who shuns such brutal joys, such gross voluptuousness, the pleasures of sense are of a more elevated kind; as soft as they are sublime; as innocent as they are pure; and as permanent as they are tranquil.

The disgust which flows from opulence disappears in the simplicity of rural life. The bolon learns to enjoy sensations very different from those it experienced in this world. The sentiments of the mind are rendered more free; the feelings of the heart more pure; neither overpowered by profusion, nor blunted by satiety.

PETRARCH one day inviting his friend the Cardinal COLONNA to visit his retirement at VAUCLUSE, wrote to him, "If you prefer the tranquility of the country to the tumults of the town, come here, and enjoy yourself: do not be alarmed at the simplicity of my table, or the hardness of my beds. Kings themselves are sometimes disgusted with luxury, and enjoy the pleasures of a more frugal repast. They are pleased by the change of scene; and occasional interruption does not render their pleasures less lively. But if you wish only to enjoy your accustomed luxury, what is to prevent your bringing with you the most exquisite viands, the wines of Vesuvius, dishes of silver, and every thing that can delight the senses! Leave the rest to me. I promise to provide you with a bed of the finest turf, a cooling shade, a concert of nightingales, figs, raisins, water drawn from the freshest springs, and, in short, every thing that the hand of nature presents to true pleasure."



Who would not, alas! willingly renounce those things which only produce disquietude in the mind, for those which render it contented? The art of occasionally diverting the imagination, taste, and passions, affords new and unknown enjoyments to the mind, and confers pleasure without pain, and luxury without repentance. The senses, deadened by satiety, revive to new enjoyments. The lively twitter of the groves and the murmur of the brooks yield a more delicious pleasure to the ear than the music of the opera, or the compositions of the ablest masters. The eye reposes more agreeably on the concave firmament, on an expanse of waters, on mountains covered with rocks, than it does at balls, assemblies, and *petits soupers*. The mind enjoys in Solitude objects which were before insupportable; and, reclining on the bosom of simplicity, easily renounces every vain delight. PETRARCH wrote from VAUCLUSE to one of his friends, "I have made war against my corporeal powers, for I find they are my enemies. My eyes, which have occasioned me to commit so many follies, are now confined to the view of a single woman, old, black, and sun-burnt. If HELEN and LUCRETIA had possessed such a face, TROY would never have been reduced to ashes, nor TARQUIN driven from the empire of the world. But, to compensate these defects, she is faithful, submissive, and industrious. She passes whole days in the fields; and her shrivelled skin defies the burning sun, even in the hottest dog-days. My wardrobe still contains fine clothes, but I never wear them; and you would take me for a common labourer or a



“ simple shepherd ; I who was formerly so anxious about my dress. But the reasons which then prevailed no longer exist ; the fetters by which I was enslaved are broken ; the eyes which I was anxious to please are shut ; and if they were still open, they would not perhaps now be able to maintain the same empire over my heart.”

SOLITUDE, by stripping worldly objects of that false splendour with which the imagination arrays them, destroys the vain ambition of the mind. Accustomed to rural pleasure, and indifferent to every other, a wise man no longer feels power and dignities worthy of his desires. A Roman was overwhelmed with tears by being obliged to accept the Consulship, because it would for one year deprive him of the pleasure of cultivating his fields. CINCINNATUS, who was called from the plough to the command of the army of the empire, defeated the enemy, possessed himself of the provinces, made his triumphal entry into Rome, and at the expiration of sixteen days returned to his plough.

To be the inmate of an humble cottage or the owner of a spacious mansion, to have every thing sumptuously provided, or to be obliged to earn the means of subsistence, are not held in equal estimation by mankind. But let the man who has experienced both the one and the other of these situations be asked, under which of them he has passed the most contented life ? who can recount the greater number of cares and inquietudes which are felt in the palace than under the roof of the simple cottager ? who can deny that, in the former, discontent poisons every enjoyment, and makes ease and superfluity



a disguised misery. The Princes of Germany cannot digest all the poison which their cooks prepare, so well as a peasant upon the heaths of LIMBOURG digests his buck-wheat pie; and those who may differ from me in this opinion, will be forced to acknowledge, that there is great truth in the reply which a pretty French country-girl made to a young and amiable nobleman who solicited her to abandon her solitary rural situation and retire with him to PARIS, "Ah! *Monsieur le Marquis*, the farther we remove from ourselves, the greater is our distance from happiness."

A single passion which we are neither inclined nor able to satisfy, frequently embitters our lives. There are moments in which the mind is discontented with itself, tired of its existence, disgusted with every thing, incapable of relishing either Solitude or Dissipation, lost to all repose, and alienated from every pleasure. Time under such a situation, although unemployed, appears horribly tedious; an impenetrable chaos of sentiment and ideas prevails; the present affords no enjoyment; and we wait with impatience for the future. The mind, in truth, wants the true salt of life; and without that, existence is insipid.

But where is this precious salt to be found? Is it in the passion of love? Love, without doubt, frequently preserves life, and sometimes gives it new vigour and animation; but a passion which undermines and consume us, can neither afford permanency nor tranquility. The love capable of raising itself to the strength and power of being permanent, must descend into a sincere



friendship, or it will destroy itself or its object, by adding fuel to a subtle flame, which will reduce the lover and beloved to a heap of cinders. The salt of life, therefore, must be extracted from a passion which does not require the aid of another to support it; which is capable of feeding itself; which acquires new force the longer it continues; and which, free and independent, raises the soul superior to every thing that surrounds it.

Solitude and limited desires afford a true happiness to the statesman who is cashiered from his office or exiled from the state. Every great Minister does not, indeed, retire from his employments, like NECKAR, through the portals of everlasting fame. But every one without distinction ought to raise their grateful hands to Heaven, on finding themselves suddenly conveyed from the troubled ocean of public life to the calm repose of their native fields, to the pastoral care of their flocks and herds, under the shade of those trees which their ancestors planted. In *France*, however, if THE MINISTER incurs the displeasure of his sovereign, he is ordered to retire; that is, to retire to the estate which he has embellished and made a most agreeable retreat. But, alas! this delightful retreat is to him a place of exile; the situation becomes intolerable, he no longer tastes its beauties with pleasure; and sleep flies from his eyes, since he is no longer his own master. The leisure he possesses renders him an impatient hypochondriac, whose mind turns with aversion from every object, and whose ill-humour tinctures every thing he sees. The disgrace of a minister in *France*



is frequently fatal to his political existence\*. But this is not the case in *England*; there they felicitate the Minister on his retirement, as a man just recovered from a dangerous distemper. He still maintains many more and better friends than he before possessed; for these are attached to him by sincere esteem, while the former were attached to him only by their interests. May the great Governor of the Universe recompense BRITONS for the examples they have given to us of men sufficiently bold and independent to weigh every transaction in the scales of reason, and to guide themselves by the intrinsic and real merit of each case! For notwithstanding the rashness with which many Englishmen have revolted against the Supreme Being, notwithstanding the laugh and mockery with which they have so frequently insulted virtue, good-manners, and decorum, there are many more among them, who, especially at an advanced period of their lives, perfectly understand the art of living by themselves; who in their tranquil and delightful VILLAS think much more nobly, and live with more freedom and dignity, than any ignorant or presumptuous Peer of Parliament possesses.

It is said, that of twenty ministers who receive the public thanks, or are forced by age to resign themselves to retirement, there are always twelve or fifteen who finish their career by becoming Gardeners and Country Gentle-

\* "It is to this end," says one of our writers, "that disgraces of almost every kind conduct men. The credit, authority, and consideration which they before enjoyed, are like those transient fires which shine during the night; and being suddenly extinguished, only render the darkness and solitude in which the traveller is involved, more visible."



men. So much the better for these Ex-Ministers; for they, like the excellent Chancellor DE LA ROCHE at *Spire*, certainly possess much more content with *the shovel* and *the rake* than they enjoyed in the most prosperous hours of their administration.

Sentiments like these furnish, it is said, an excellent theme to those who, ignorant of the manners of the world, and unacquainted with men, are fond of moralizing, and of extolling a contempt of human greatness. Rural innocence and amusement, the pure and simple pleasures of nature, and the enjoyment of a calm content so arduously acquired, very seldom form, it is contended, any portion of those boasted advantages which this Solitude is said to possess. It is added also, that a minister in office, though surrounded by endless difficulties, subject to incessant torment, obliged to rack his brains, and to ~~employ every art and cunning to attain his ends,~~ begins by his success to feel, that he has attained, what until this period he had never before possessed, the character of MASTER and SOVEREIGN; that he is then enabled to create and to destroy, to plant and to root up, to make alterations when and where he pleases; that he may pull down a vineyard and erect an English grove on its site; make hills where hills were never seen before; level eminences with the ground, compel the stream to flow as his inclinations shall direct; force woods and shrubberies to grow where he pleases; graft or lop as it shall strike his idea; open views and shut out boundaries; construct ruins where ruins never happened; erect temples of which he alone is the high-priest, and build hermitages where he



may seclude himself at pleasure : that all this is not a reward for the restraints he formerly experienced, but a natural inclination, since now he may give orders without being himself obliged to obey ; for A MINISTER must be, from the habits of his life, fond of command and sovereignty to the end of his days, whether he continues at the head of an extensive empire, or directs the management of a poultry-yard.

To maintain that it is necessary to renounce the natural passions of the human mind in order to enjoy the advantages of Solitude, would, without doubt, not only be moralizing very awkwardly, but discover a great ignorance of the world, and of the nature of MAN. That which is planted in the breast of man must there remain. If therefore A MINISTER be not fatigued with the exercise of power and authority, if in his retirement he still retain the weakness to wish for command, let him require obedience from his chickens whenever he pleases, provided such a gratification is essential to his happiness, and tends to suppress the desire of again exposing himself to those tempests and shipwrecks which he can only avoid in the safe harbour of rural life\*. An EX-MINISTER must sooner or later learn to despise the appearances of human grandeur ; for in his retirement he will perceive that true greatness frequently begins at that period of life which Statesmen are apt to consider

\* “ MARSHAL DE BOUFFLERS has retired to cultivate his fields,” said MADAME MAINTENON : “ I am of opinion that this CINGINNATUS would not be sorry to be fetched from his plow. At his departure he charged us all to think of him, if any thing was wanted during his absence, which may perhaps continue fifteen days.”



as a dreary void ; he will discover that the regret of being no longer able to do more good, is only ambition in disguise ; and feel that the inhabitants of the country, in cultivating their cabbages and asparagus, are a hundred times happier than the greatest MINISTER.

Under such circumstances it is only necessary to be contented with one's self, to forget the superfluities of life, and to render the little we possess as palatable as possible. The first year which PETRARCH passed at *Vaucluse* he was almost always alone, had no other company than his dog, no other servant than a neighbouring fisherman, who served him with every thing he wanted. The domestics who attended him at *Avignon*, not being able to accustom themselves to this manner of living, quitted his service. Beside, he was badly lodged, having only one poor cottage for his residence, which he afterwards rebuilt without any art, merely to render it tenantable, and even the traces of which no longer remain. His fare was coarse and frugal ; nothing that flatters the senses was to be seen there. His best friends therefore called upon him very seldom, and when they came, their visits were very short ; others only visited him from the same charitable feelings which lead men to the chamber of the sick, or the dungeon of the prisoner. He wrote to his friend PHILIP DE CARABOLE, Bishop of *Cavaillon*, who was then at Naples, " Let others run after riches and honours ; let them be Princes and Kings ; I shall never attempt to impede their career. I am contented with the humble character of Poet. And why, my good BISHOP, will you continually wander from place to place



“merely to discover the road to preferment?  
 “You know the snares which are laid in the  
 “Courts of Princes, the anxieties which cor-  
 “rode the heart, the risques which are run,  
 “and the storms to which life is exposed there.  
 “Return therefore to your diocese, return to  
 “tranquility and repose. You may do this  
 “with honour, while fortune smiles upon you.  
 “You will there find every thing you can de-  
 “fire. Leave superfluity to the avaricious.  
 “The rooms, although not decorated with  
 “tapestry, are commodiously furnished. If  
 “our table is not sumptuous, yet we have some-  
 “thing at least to satisfy hunger. Our beds are  
 “not covered with gold and purple, but we do  
 “not sleep in them with less comfort. The  
 “hour of death approaches, and warns me to  
 “renounce all the extravagant vanities of life.  
 “To cultivate my gardens is now the only  
 “pleasure I pursue. I plant fruit-trees, in hope  
 “that while I am fishing on my rocks, they  
 “will cover me with their shade. But my  
 “trees are old, and require to be replaced; I  
 “must therefore request that you will desire  
 “your attendants to bring me some plants of  
 “the peach and pear tree from *Naples*. The  
 “enjoyments of my old age are purchased by la-  
 “bour; and I live in the expectation of future  
 “pleasures, which I intend to participate with  
 “you alone: this is what the Hermit on the  
 “banks of the *SERGUE* writes to you from the  
 “middle of the forest.”

SOLITUDE, however, will not procure us  
 all these advantages, unless we renounce the  
*mania* of refining upon happiness. By endea-  
 vouring to make things better than they are,



we forget all that is good. He who always views things on the unfavourable side, who wishes that all those things which are wrong, and which ought to remain wrong, were made right, voluntarily surrenders a large portion of his pleasures; for without so great a number of *Wrongheads* in the world, life would not be half so entertaining as it is.

To live happily, it is an excellent maxim to take things just as they are; or to admit, with a celebrated German philosopher, as the foundation of all morality, that it is our duty to do as much good as possible, and to be contented with every thing as we find it. This species of morality is certainly founded in toleration and good nature; but it is apt to degenerate too easily into a looser kind of philosophy\*, which produces nothing good in daring minds, and does not render the people free. It is true, however, that there is no character in the world so unhappy as he who is continually finding fault with every thing he sees.

My barber at *Hanover*, while he was preparing to shave me, exclaimed with a deep sigh, "*It is terribly hot to-day.*" "You place Heaven," said I to him, "in great difficulties; for these nine months last past you have regularly told me every other day, "*It is terribly cold to-day.*" Cannot the Almighty, then, any longer govern the Universe without these gentlemen-barbers finding something to be discontented with?

\* "Let the world go as it pleases," says an ingenious writer, "to do one's duty tolerably well, and speak always in praise of the good PRIOR," is an ancient maxim of the monks; but it may lead the discipline of convents into a state of mediocrity, relaxation, and contempt.



“Is it not,” I asked him, “much better to take the seasons as they change, and to receive with equal gratitude from the hands of God the winter’s cold and summer’s warmth?—“Oh! certainly,” replied the barber.

I may therefore with certainty maintain, that competency and content are, in general, highly beneficial to mankind; and that under many circumstances Solitude favours both the one and the other.

One of the advantages we still owe to Solitude is, that it enables us by habit to relinquish the society of men. For as it is impossible always to procure agreeable and interesting company, we soon lose the desire to attain it, and console ourselves with the idea, that it is incomparably more easy to drive away langour and discontent in retirement than in the world: beside, as it very rarely happens that on quitting a public assembly we enter with great good-humour into the examination of ourselves, this ought to be still another reason to induce us the more easily to renounce it. The less, therefore, we form connections with other men, the more we are qualified for an intercourse with ourselves, independent of all acquaintance with the world.

It is frequently difficult to find an amiable and sensible character with whom we may form connection, and to whom we can freely communicate our thoughts, our pleasures, and our pains. In this case nothing but employment and activity can divert our minds. The idle and unemployed not being able to drive away lassitude and discontent by yawning, expect that relief from the coming on of time, which the industrious enjoy



every moment of their lives. The coldness of indolence freezes all the functions of the heart and the dread of labour poisons every pleasure. But the man who seriously adopts some useful course of life, who immediately executes whatever his station calls upon him to perform, always enjoys a contented mind. To him the day appears too short, the night too long. Vexation and disquietude vanish from the breast of him who never leaves for the performance of to-morrow that which may be done to-day, who makes himself master of the present moment, and does not indiscreetly rely upon an uncertain futurity.

A situation in a small village, or a country retirement, is best suited to this species of employment. The great world is a scene of agitation from morning to night, although, strictly speaking, nothing is done during the day. In a small village, or more sequestered situation, the mind has time to think; we view every object with more interest; and discharge every duty with higher pleasure. We do not read as the world reads, merely to say that we have read, but to enjoy and benefit by the good which our reading affords. Every thing we read in silence, in tranquility, sinks deep into the mind, unites itself more closely with our thoughts, and operates more forcibly on the heart. A judicious use of time in such a situation soon lessens our inclination to society, and, at length, we esteem ourselves completely happy in finding it totally extinguished.

For this reason, the silence of the country proves frequently, to the female mind, the school of true philosophy. In ENGLAND, where the



face of Nature is so beautiful, and where the inhabitants are hourly adding new embellishments to her charms, RURAL LIFE possesses in itself inexpressible delights : but among that active people, the love of Solitude is perhaps, in general, much stronger in the women than the men. The nobleman who employs the day in riding over his estate, or in following the hounds, does not enjoy the Solitude of rural life with the same pleasure as his lady, who employs her time in needlework, or in reading in her romantic pleasure grounds some instructive or affecting work. In ENGLAND, where ideas flow so rapidly, where, in general, the people love so much to think, the calm of retirement becomes more valuable, and the enjoyments of the mind more interesting. The learning which has at present so considerably increased among the ladies of GERMANY, certainly owes its origin to rural life ; for among those who pass much of their time in the country, who lead a life of retirement, and read only for their improvement, we find in general incomparably more true wit and sentiment than among the *beaux esprits* of the metropolis.

How would those who occasionally reside in the country abridge the time of their residence in town, if they weighed and felt the advantages of a rural situation ! The frivolous enjoyments of the metropolis would then vex and disgust their minds ; they would soon be discontented to see men employ time with so little improvement to themselves ; in running incessantly after every thing that is strange, devoting their whole lives to dress, gaming, paying visits, without ever resigning themselves to those sublime reflections



which elevate and ennoble the heart. Possessed of goodness, liberality, and simplicity, a country life, after having lived in town, affords so many opportunities of being happy, that it is impossible to be languid or discontented, provided we are neither negligent, idle, sick, or in love.

How sweet, how consoling it is in the tranquillity of retirement to call to remembrance our absent friends! Ah, this remembrance alone makes us taste again in Solitude all the pleasures we have enjoyed in their society.—“You are far removed, but I am notwithstanding always near to you. There is the place where you used to sit. I have the identical chair still by me. You gave me that picture; that charming, tranquil, landscape. With what soft effusion, with what a natural overflow of feeling and sentiment we enjoyed the view of that engraving, upon those lively images of a happy tranquillity! Is it possible to be unhappy, we may exclaim, when we never live with higher joy, with greater activity, never feel the pleasures of hope and expectation with more refined delight than when we are only one day's journey from each other!”—By the aid of these light artifices of imagination, these flattering illusions, which Solitude suggests, two friends, separated by the greatest distance, may live in continual intercourse with each other, even when separated by oceans; when each no longer listens to the voice or distinguishes the approaching steps of the object he loves.

Friends whom destiny has separated from each other, do not any where feel their sentiments so noble and refined as in those places where no-



thing interrupts this soft intercourse, and where the pleasures of the world cannot interpose between their hearts. Mutual ill humour, those mortifications which a commerce with the world daily inflicts, and a number of little accidents, may sometimes lessen the delight which the company of the dearest friend would otherwise afford. In these unhappy moments the mind is only influenced by the temporary feelings of the heart, and never once recurs to those friendly intercourses which once prevailed when engaged in the most important affairs, and to which it will soon again return for ever. He who until this time had attracted my love, now repels it by ill-humour; and how many agreeable sentiments, how many of the most delightful pleasures of my life would be lost, if I were always to forget the past in the present, and to answer his peevishness by my ill-humour! A short vexation, and that little subacid humour which will sometimes arise, only obscures for one instant the flattering image under which my friend is accustomed to appear before me, whose presence always raises such delightful sensations in my heart, diffuses felicity and pleasure over my life, charms every vexation from my breast, banishes my ill humour, and who, until the present moment, has ever concealed his ill humour from my view. This must be, without doubt, the privilege of intimacy. But friends ought not to wreak their discontents on each other; friends who have heretofore shared together in all the misfortunes of life, who have mutually suffered for, and endeavoured to relieve, the feelings of each other's breast. Friendship demands sincerity, but she



also in common benevolence demands a mutual indulgence and accommodation ; and requires that mildness should be opposed to anger, and patience to ill-humour. This, however, can never happen where each indulges the asperities of his temper, and, crossed by the embarrassments of life, becomes peevish, forgets every attention and civility himself, and complains that they are not observed to him. But how quickly do all these inconveniencies disappear in Solitude ! Solitude sanctifies the memory of those we love, and cancels all recollection but that which contributes to the enjoyments of Friendship ! Constancy, security, confidence, there appear again in all their brightness, and reassume their empire in the heart. Every pulse of the soul beats in perfect harmony : I listen with pleasure to my friend, he attends to me in return ; although distant, he is always near to me ; I communicate to him all my thoughts and all my sensations. I preserve as sacred to our friendship, all the flowers that he strews over the thorny path of my life ; and all those which I can perceive I gather for him.

Solitude not only refines the enjoyments of friendship, but places us in a situation to gain friends whom neither time nor accident can take away, from whom nothing can alienate our souls, and to whose arms we never fly in vain.

The friends of PETRARCH sometimes wrote to him, apologizing for not having been to see him. " It is impossible to live with you," say they ; " the life which you lead at *Vaucluse* is repugnant to human nature. In winter you sit, like an owl, with your face over the fire ; in the summer you are incessantly running



“ about the fields : seldom does one find you  
 “ seated under the shade of a tree.”——

PETRARCH smiled at these representations :  
 “ These people,” said he, “ consider the plea-  
 “ sures of the world as their supreme good ; and  
 “ conceive that one ought not to renounce  
 “ them. I possess a number of friends whose  
 “ society is extremely agreeable to me. They  
 “ are of all countries, and of all ages ; they are  
 “ distinguished in war, in politics, and in the  
 “ sciences. It is very easy to acquire them ;  
 “ they are always at my service : I call for their  
 “ company, and send them away whenever I  
 “ please ; they are never troublesome, and im-  
 “ mediately answer all my questions. Some re-  
 “ late to me the events of ages past ; others re-  
 “ veal the secrets of nature : these teach me  
 “ how to live with happiness ; and those how to  
 “ die in quiet : these drive away every care by  
 “ the enjoyment they afford me, and increase  
 “ my gaiety by the liveliness of their wit ; while  
 “ there are others who harden my heart against  
 “ sufferings, teach me to restrain my desires,  
 “ and to depend only on myself. In one word,  
 “ they open to me an avenue to all the arts, to  
 “ all the sciences, and upon their information I  
 “ safely rely. In return for these great services,  
 “ they only require of me a chamber in one cor-  
 “ ner of my small mansion, where they may re-  
 “ pose in peace. In short, I carry them with  
 “ me into the fields, with the tranquility of  
 “ which they are much better pleased than the  
 “ tumults of the town.”



LOVE ! the most precious gift of heaven, that happy sensibility from which arises every emotion of the heart, appears to merit a distinguished rank among the advantages of Solitude, provided we manage this powerful passion in such a manner that it may contribute to our happiness.

LOVE associates itself willingly with the aspect of beautiful nature. The sentiments excited by the view of a pleasing prospect inspire the tender heart with love, and in a higher degree than any other agreeable emotion of the mind. The female bosom becomes more susceptible under the silent shades, upon the summit of a lofty mountain, or, more especially, during the stillness of a fine night ; and as a violent emotion always operates more forcibly upon the weakest parts, enthusiasm, sooner or later, draws aside and subjugates the heart.

Women most certainly feel with more exquisite sensibility than men the pure and tranquil pleasures of rural life. They enjoy in a much higher degree the beauties of a lonely walk, the freshness of a shady forest ; and their minds admire with higher extacy the charms and grandeur of nature. There are many bosoms, apparently insensible in the atmosphere of a metropolis, which would, perhaps open themselves with rapture in the country. This is the reason why the return of Spring fills every tender breast with LOVE. "What can more resemble LOVE," said a celebrated German Philosopher, "than the feelings with which my soul is inspired at the sight of this magnificent valley thus illumined by the sitting sun !"



ROUSSEAU felt an inexpressible pleasure on viewing the early blossoms of the spring: the arrival of that season gave new life to his mind. The tender inclinations of his soul increased at the sight of a rich carpet of verdure; the charms of his mistress and the beauties of the spring were in his eyes the same thing. His oppressed heart was relieved by an extensive and pleasing prospect; and his respiration was much easier while he indulged himself among the flowers of a garden or the fruits of the orchard.

LOVERS are best pleased with retired situations; they seek the quietude of solitary places to resign themselves to the contemplation of the only object for whom they wish to live. Of what importance are all the transactions of cities to them, or any thing indeed that does not breathe or inspire the passion of LOVE? Obscure chambers, black forests of firs, or lonely lakes, where they may indulge their favourite reflections, are the only confidants of their souls. Forests filled with gloomy shades, and echoing to the tremendous eagle's cry; are the same to their minds as the liveliest champaign country, where a lovely shepherdess may be seen offering her fostering bosom to the infant she is nursing, while at her side her well-beloved partner sits, dividing with her his morsel of hard black bread, a hundred times more happy than all the fops of the town. A man of sense, when in love, feels in a higher degree, all that is elevated, pleasant, and affecting in nature. Nothing in the world creates a finer sensibility, even when the mind is destitute of it by nature, than LOVE.



The softest images of love spring up anew in Solitude. Ah! how indelible are the impressions made by the first blush of love, the first pressure of the hand, the first feelings of anger against the impertinent intruder who shall interrupt the tender intercourse! It has been frequently conceived, that time extinguishes the flame which LOVE has once lighted in our breasts; but LOVE has agents in the soul that lie long concealed, who wait only for a proper moment to display their power. It is the same with the whole course of youthful feelings; and especially with every remembrance of our first affection; delicious recollection! which we love so fondly to trace back in our minds.

The impression is indelible, the bosom for ever retains a sense of that highest extacy of love, which a connoisseur has said, with as much truth as energy, proclaims for the first time that happy discovery, that fortunate moment, when two lovers percieve their mutual fondness\*.

A mind fond of reflecting in retirement on the passion of love, and which has experienced its pleasures, feels again in these ever-recurring thoughts the most delicious enjoyments. HERDER says, "he does not know who the people in *Asia* were, whose mythology thus divided the epochs of the most remote antiquity: That men, once more become celestial spirits, were

\* No person has described the recollection of that precious moment with so much harmony, sweetness, tenderness, and sentiment, as ROUSSEAU. "Precious moments, so much regretted! Oh! begin again your delightful course; flow on with longer duration in my remembrance, if it be possible, than you did in reality in your fugitive succession—"



“ immediately beloved during a thousand years, first by looks, then by a kiss, afterwards by alliance.” This was the noble and sublime passion which WIELAND felt during the warmest moments of his youth for a lady of *Zurich*, handsome, amiable, and sensible; for that great genius well knew that the mystery of love begins in the first sigh, and expires, in a certain degree, with the first kiss. I therefore one day asked this young lady when WIELAND had kissed her for the first time. “ WIELAND,” replied the lovely girl, “ kissed my hand for the first time four years after our acquaintance commenced.”

But the minds of young persons who live in retirement, do not, like WIELAND, seize on the mystic refinements of LOVE. Listening attentively to all those sentiments which the passions inspire, less familiar with their abstractions, their minds seldom taken off by other ideas, they feel at a much earlier age, in the tranquility of Solitude, that irresistible impulse to the union of the sexes which nature inspires. A lady of my acquaintance who lived upon the banks of the Lake of *Geneva* in silent Solitude, and separated from all connexion with the world, had three daughters, *brunes piquantes*, all of them extremely beautiful in their persons, and equally amiable in their manners. When the eldest was about fourteen years of age, and the youngest was about nine, they were presented with a tame bird, which hopped and flew about their chamber the whole day. The young ladies required no other amusement, sought no other employment, except that of placing themselves on their knees, and with unwearied delight offering their lovely little favourite a piece of biscuit from their fingers for



hours together, in order to lure him to their bosoms. The bird, however, the moment he had got the biscuit, with cunning coyness disappointed their expectations, and hopped away. The bird died. A year after this event the youngest of the three sisters said to her mother, "Oh, the dear little bird, mamma! if we could but procure such another!"—"No," replied her eldest sister, "what I should like better than any thing else in the world, is a little dog. We may at least be able to touch, to hug, to take a little dog upon one's knees; but a bird is good for nothing: he perches a little while on your finger, flies away, and there is no catching him again. But with a little dog, O what felicity!"

I shall never forget the poor *religieuse* in whose apartment I found a breeding-cage of canary-birds; nor forgive myself for having burst into a fit of laughter at the sight of this aviary. Alas! it was the suggestion of nature, and who can resist what nature suggests? This mystic wandering of religious minds, this celestial epilepsy of love, this premature fruit of Solitude, is only the fond application of one natural inclination raised superior to all the others.

Absence and tranquillity appear so favourable to the passion of love, that lovers frequently chuse to quit the beloved object, and to reflect in Solitude on her charms. Who does not recollect to have read in the confessions of ROUSSEAU the story related by MADAME DE LUXEMBOURG, of the man who quitted the company of his mistress only that he might have the pleasure of writing to her! ROUSSEAU told MADAME DE LUXEMBOURG that he wished he had been that man;



and he was right. In fact, who has ever loved, and does not know, that there are times when the pen expresses the feelings of the heart infinitely better than the voice with its miserable organ of speech, which is nothing, and expresses nothing? Who is ever more eloquent than lovers in those moments of extacy when they gaze on each other, and are silent.

LOVERS not only feel with higher extacies, but express their sentiments with greater happiness, in Solitude than in any other situation. What fashionable lover has ever painted his passion for an imperious mistress with the same felicity as the chorister of a village in Hanover for a young and beautiful country girl? On her death, the chorister raised in the cemetery of the cathedral a sepulchral stone to her memory, and carving in an artless manner the figure of a Rose on its front, inscribed these words underneath: "*C'est ainsi qu'elle fut.*"

It was under the rocks of VAUCLUSE, or in deserts still more solitary, that PETRARCH composed his finest sonnets, deploring the absence, or complaining of the cruelty, of his beloved LAURA. In the opinion of the Italians, PETRARCH wrote better upon the subject of LOVE than all the other poets in the world before or since his time, whether in the Greek, Latin, or Tuscan languages. "Ah! that pure and tender language of the heart!" say they, "nobody possessed any knowledge of it but PETRARCH, who added to the three Graces a fourth, viz. the Grace of DELICACY."



But in lonely situations, in old romantic castles, in the heated imagination of impetuous youth, Love also frequently assumes a more *outré* and extravagant character. To warm enthusiastic minds, religion, love, and melancholy, make a sublime and whimsical compound of the feelings of the heart. An ardent young man, when he is inclined that his mistress should be serious, takes from the Apocalypse the text of his first declaration of love; for love, he exclaims, is but an eternal melancholy, and when he is inclined to sharpen the dart within his breast, his exalted imagination views the beloved object as the fairest model of divine perfection.

Our two angels, in their ancient castle, no longer love like souls less pure and noble; their sentiments more refined, are also more sublime. Surrounded by rocks, and impressed by the silence of a fine night, the beloved youth is not only a man, kind, rational, and honest, he is a God\*. The inspired mind of the fond female fancies her bosom to be the sanctuary of love, and conceives her affection for the youthful idol of her heart to be an emanation from heaven, a ray of the divinity itself. Ordinary lovers, without doubt, in spite of absence, unite their souls with each other, write by every post, seize all occasions to converse with each other, or to hear each other speak; but our female, more sublime, more exalted,

\* "When the passion of Love is at its height," says ROUSSEAU, "it arrays the beloved object in every possible perfection; makes it an idol, places it in heaven: and as the enthusiasm of devotion borrows the language of love, the enthusiasm of love also borrows the language of devotion. The lover beholds nothing but paradise, angels, the virtues of saints, and the felicities of heaven."



introduces into her romance all the butterflies she meets with, all the feathered songsters of the groves; and, except perhaps her husband, she no longer sees any thing in the world such as it is. The senses are nothing; refinement directs all her movements. She tears the world from its poles, and the sun from its axis, to prove that all she does, all she wishes, is right. She establishes a new gospel and a new system of morality for herself and her lover. These effects of Love cannot be avoided by any of the advantages of Solitude. Love even of the most tranquil kind, that species which lies silent in the breast, which does not raise chimeras in the mind, which does not resign itself to the delirium of an ardent imagination, and which is not carried into these excesses, in time consumes the lover, and renders him miserable. Occupied by the idea of one object, whom we adore beyond all others, all the faculties of the soul become absorbed, and we abandon a world which for us no longer possesses any charms. But when we find ourselves separated for ever from the lovely object who has made even the highest sacrifice to us in her power; who administered consolation under all the afflictions of our lives, afforded happiness under the greatest calamities, and supported us when all the powers of the soul had abandoned us; who continued a sincere friend when every other friend had left us, when oppressed by domestic sorrows, when rendered incapable of either thought or action; then to languish in a slothful Solitude becomes our only pleasure. The night is passed in sleepless agonies; while a disgust of life, a desire of death, an abhorrence of all society, and a love of the most frightful deserts, prey upon



the heart, and drive us, day after day, wandering, as chance may direct, through the most solitary retirements, far from the hateful traces of mankind. Were we, however, to wander from the ELBE to the Lake of GENEVA, to seek relief from the north to the west, even to the shores of the sea, we should still be like *the hind* described in VIRGIL,

“ *Stung with the stroke, and madding with the pain,*  
 “ *She wildly flies from wood to wood in vain ;*  
 “ *Shoots o’er the Cretan lawns with many a bound,*  
 “ *The cleaving dart still rankling in the wound !”*

VIRGIL, *Book IV. line 110.*

PETRARCH experienced the accumulated torments of love in his new residence at VAUCLUSE. Scarcely had he arrived there, when the image of LAURA incessantly haunted his mind. He beheld her at all times, in every place, under a thousand different forms. “ Three  
 “ times,” says he, “ in the dead of night, when  
 “ every door was closed, she appeared to me at  
 “ the feet of my bed with a certain look which  
 “ announced the power of her charms. Fear  
 “ spread a chilling dew over all my limbs. My  
 “ blood thrilled through my veins towards my  
 “ heart. If any one had then entered my room  
 “ with a candle, they would have beheld me as  
 “ pale as death, with every mark of terror on  
 “ my face. Before day-break I rose trembling  
 “ from my bed, and hastily leaving my house,  
 “ where every thing excited alarm, I climbed  
 “ to the summit of the rocks, ran through the  
 “ woods, casting my eyes continually around to  
 “ see if the form that had disturbed my repose



" still pursued me. I could find no asylum : in  
 " the most sequestered places where I flattered  
 " myself that I should be alone, I frequently  
 " saw her issuing from the trunk of a tree, from  
 " the head of a clear spring, from the cavity of  
 " a rock. Fear rendered me insensible, and I  
 " neither knew what I did nor where I went."

To an imagination subject to such violent convulsions, Solitude affords no remedy. OVID therefore, has very justly said,

" *But Solitude must never be allow'd :*  
 " *A lover's ne'er so safe as in a crowd.*  
 " *For private places private grief increase ;*  
 " *What haunts you there in company will cease.*  
 " *If to the gloomy desert you repair,*  
 " *Your mistress' angry form will meet you there."*  
 OVID'S *Remedy of Love.*

PETRARCH learnt from the first emotions of his passion, how useless are all attempts to fly from LOVE ; and he sought the rocks and forests in vain. There is no place, however savage and forlorn, where LOVE will not force its way. The pure and limpid stream of VAUCLUSE, the shady woods adorning the little valley in which the stream arose, appeared to him the only places to abate the fierceness of those fires which consumed his heart. The most frightful deserts, the deepest forests, mountains almost inaccessible, were to him the most agreeable abodes. But LOVE pursued his steps wherever he went, and left him no place of refuge. His whole soul flew back to AVIGNON.



SOLITUDE also affords no remedy for LOVE when it is injurious to VIRTUE. To an honest mind the presence of the beloved object is never dangerous, although the passion may have taken a criminal turn in the heart. On the contrary, while absence and Solitude foment all the secret movements of the senses and the imagination, the sight of the beloved object destroys, in a virtuous breast, every forbidden desire; for in absence the lover thinks himself secure, and consequently indulges his imagination without restraint. Solitude, more than any other situation, recalls to the mind every voluptuous idea, every thing that animates desire and inflames the heart: no danger being apprehended, the lover walks boldly on in the flattering paths of an agreeable illusion, until the passion acquires a dangerous empire in his breast.

The heart of PETRARCH was frequently stimulated by ideas of voluptuous pleasure, even among the rocks of VAUCLUSE, where he sought an asylum from LOVE and LAURA\*. But he

\* We read in a variety of books, now no longer known that PETRARCH lived at VAUCLUSE with LAURA, and that he had formed a subterraneous passage from her house to his own. PETRARCH was not so happy. LAURA was married, and lived with her husband HUGUES DE SADES at AVIGNON, the place of her nativity, and where she died. She was the mother of eleven children, which had so debilitated her constitution, that at five-and-thirty years of age no traces of her former beauty remained. She experienced, also, many domestic sorrows. Her husband was incapable of appreciating the value of her virtues, and the propriety of her conduct. He was jealous without cause, and even without LOVE, which to a woman was still more mortifying. PETRARCH, on the contrary, loved LAURA during the course of twenty years; but he was never suffered to visit her at her own house, for her husband seldom, if ever, left her alone. He therefore had no opportunity of beholding his charming, his ami-



soon banished sensuality from his mind : the passion of his soul then became refined, and acquired that vivacity and heavenly purity which breathe in every line of those immortal lyrics he composed upon the rocks. The city of AVIGNON, where his LAURA resided, was, however, too near to him, and he visited it too frequently. A love like his never leaves the heart one moment of tranquility ; it is a fever of the soul, which afflicts the body with a complication of the most painful disorders. Let a lover therefore, while his mind is yet able to controul the emotions of his heart, seat himself on the banks of a rivulet, and think that his passion, like the stream which now precipitates itself with noise down the rocks, may in peaceful shades and solitary bowers flow across the meadows and the plains in silence and tranquillity.

Love unites itself to tranquility, when the mind submits with humility to all the dispensations of heaven. If, when death bereaves a lover of the object of his affection, he is unable to live except in those places where she was used to dwell, and all the world besides looks desert and forlorn, death alone can stop the torrent of his tears. But it is not by yielding himself to the pressure of his affliction, that he can be said to devote himself to God: the lover, when oppressed by sorrow, constantly attaches himself

able LAURA, except at church, at assemblies, or upon the public walks, and then never alone. Her husband frequently forbid her to walk even with her dearest friends, and his mind was rendered furious whenever she indulged in the slightest pleasure. Laura was born in the year 1307 or 1308, and was two or three years younger than PETRARCH. She died of the plague in the year 1348. Seven years after her death her husband married again, and PETRARCH survived her till about the commencement of the year 1374.



to the object which is no more, and never can return. He seeks for what he can never find; he listens, but hears nothing: he fancies that he beholds the lovely form alive and breathing, when it is only a phantom, a visionary production of his heated imagination. He gathers roses from the tomb of her on whom all the happiness of his life depended; he waters them with his tears, cultivates them with the tenderest care, places them in his bosom, kisses them with rapture, and enjoys their soothing fragrance with melancholy transport; but these pleasures also vanish; the roses droop their heads, and die. It is not until the lover has long wrestled with the rigours of fate, until the arms have long been in vain extended to embrace the beloved object, until the eye has long fixed its view upon the cherished shade, until all hope of re-union is gone, that the mind begins gradually to feel its returning powers, assumes an heroic courage against its misfortune, endeavours to conquer the weakness of the heart, and perceives the return of its former tranquility. These cures, however, can only be effected in vigorous minds, who alone crown whatever they undertake with success: vigorous minds alone find in Solitude that peace which the whole universe, with all its pleasures and dissipations, cannot procure.

The victory which the virtuous PETRARCH, acquired over the passion which assailed the heart, must afford pleasure to every mind. When he sought refuge in Italy from LOVE and LAURA, his friends in France used every endeavour to induce him to return. One of them wrote to him: "What dæmon possesses you? How could you quit a country where you have enjoyed



“ all the delights of youth, and where that  
“ graceful person which you formerly adorned  
“ with so much care, procured you so many  
“ pleasures? How can you live thus exiled from  
“ your LAURA, whom you love with so much  
“ tenderness, and whose heart is so deeply af-  
“ flicted by your absence?”

PETRARCH replied: “ Your anxiety is vain ;  
“ my resolution is to continue where I am. I am  
“ here at anchor, and neither the impetuosity  
“ of the RHONE, nor the charms of your elo-  
“ quence, shall ever drive me from it. To  
“ persuade me to change this resolution, you  
“ place before my eyes the deviations of my  
“ youth, which I ought to forget; a passion  
“ which left me no other resource than a preci-  
“ pitate flight, and the contemptible merit of a  
“ handsome person, which too long occupied  
“ my attention. The period is arrived, when  
“ I must no longer think of those follies; I have  
“ left them behind me; and I rapidly approach  
“ to the end of my career. My mind is now  
“ occupied by more serious and important ob-  
“ jects. God forbid, that listening to your  
“ flattering counsel, I should again throw myself  
“ into the snares of LOVE, again put on a yoke  
“ I have already so severely felt! It was confis-  
“ tent with the age of youth, but I should now  
“ blush to be a subject of conversation to the  
“ world, and to see myself pointed at as I walk  
“ along. I consider all your solicitations, and,  
“ indeed, all you tell me, as a severe critique  
“ upon my conduct. My love of Solitude takes  
“ root at this place; I fly from town, and stroll  
“ at random about the fields, without care,  
“ without inquietude. In summer I stretch



" myself beneath the shade upon the verdant  
 " turf, or saunter on the borders of a purling  
 " stream, and defy the heats of Italy. On the  
 " approach of autumn I seek the woods, and  
 " join THE MUSES train. This mode of life  
 " appears to me preferable to a life at court ; a  
 " life occupied only by ambition and envy. I  
 " walk with pleasure on the plains of Italy ; the  
 " air of the climate is to me serene and pure.  
 " When death shall put a period to my labours,  
 " I only ask the consolation of reposing my head  
 " upon the bosom of a friend, whose eyes, while  
 " he closes mine, will deplore my loss, and whose  
 " kind care will convey me to a tomb in the  
 " bosom of my country."

These were the sentiments, the philosophic  
 sentiments of PETRARCH ; but he returned soon  
 afterward to AVIGNON, from whence he continued  
 from time to time to visit VAUCLUSE.

PETRARCH himself acknowledges, with that  
 frankness which was natural to his character,  
 how much his unsettled soul wavered between  
 LOVE and REASON. From his retirement at  
 VAUCLUSE he wrote to his friend PASTRENGO,  
 " Perceiving that there is no other way to effect  
 " my cure than to abandon AVIGNON, I have  
 " determined to leave it, notwithstanding all  
 " the efforts of my friends to detain me. Alas !  
 " their friendship only tends to render me un-  
 " happy ! I sought this Solitude as an asylum  
 " against the tempests of life, and to live here  
 " yet a little while retired and alone before I die.  
 " I already perceive that I am near my end ; but  
 " I feel with infinite pleasure that my mind is  
 " much more free ; and the life which I lead  
 " here appears to me like that of the happy in



" heaven. Observe, however, the prevalence  
 " of habit, and the force of passion; for with-  
 " out having any business, I frequently return  
 " to that hateful city. I run voluntarily into  
 " the same snares by which I was first caught.  
 " An adverse wind drives me from the port  
 " which I have entered, upon that troubled  
 " ocean where I have so frequently been ship-  
 " wrecked. I am no sooner there than I feel  
 " myself in a vessel tossed about by the tempest.  
 " I perceive the heavens on fire, the sea raging,  
 " and dangers surrounding me on every side.  
 " Death presents itself to my eyes; but what is  
 " still worse than death, I turn from my present  
 " life with aversion, and dread that which is to  
 " come."

PASTRENGO replied as a friend, who knew  
 not only what PETRARCH practised, but the  
 kind of sentiments which would make him feel  
 that which he was delighted to perform: "it is  
 " with pleasure I learn," says he, "that you  
 " have burst open the doors of your prison,  
 " shaken off your chains, and set yourself free;  
 " that after a violent tempest you have at last  
 " reached the port you wished to gain, and ride  
 " safe in the harbour of a quiet life. I can at  
 " this distance discover every thing you do, day  
 " after day, in your retreat at VAUCLUSE. At  
 " the earliest dawn of day, awakened by the  
 " warblers of your groves, and the murmurs of  
 " your spring, you climb the hills yet covered  
 " with the dew, and from thence view the fer-  
 " tile plains, the cultivated vallies, smiling at  
 " your feet; discovering, now and then, the  
 " distant sea bearing the freighted vessels to  
 " their ports. The tablets are ready in your



“ hand, to note down the thoughts which fill  
 “ your mind. When the sun rises above the  
 “ horizon, you seek your humble cot, partake  
 “ of a frugal repast, and enjoy undisturbed re-  
 “ pose. To avoid the meridian heat of the day,  
 “ you retire into the vales, where your delight-  
 “ ful spring precipitating over the rocks with  
 “ echoing sounds, pours forth its wandering  
 “ streams, and forms the charming river which  
 “ fertilizes the valley of VAUCLUSE. - I see the  
 “ cavern through which the water, sometimes  
 “ low and tranquil, enters, and where, even in  
 “ the hottest day of summer, there breathes so  
 “ fresh an air. Within the shades of that grot-  
 “ to, whose arched and lofty roof hangs o’er the  
 “ moving crystal of the stream, I perceive you  
 “ sitting, enjoying with ravished eyes the en-  
 “ chanting view which lies before you: your  
 “ imagination warms, your soul takes its intel-  
 “ lectual flight, and then you produce your  
 “ choicest works. Thus retired, you consider  
 “ all the vanities of this world as a light shadow  
 “ which has passed away, and quietly renounce  
 “ them to a more useful employment of your  
 “ time. When you quit the grotto your tablets  
 “ are full. Do not, however, flatter yourself  
 “ that you alone enjoy these treasures of your  
 “ soul: for mine, which never quits you, par-  
 “ ticipates with you in this useful and agreeable  
 “ enjoyment.”

Such was the felicity which PETRARCH  
 tasted at VAUCLUSE in the midst of so many  
 dangers; a felicity which LOVE, too impatient  
 for enjoyment, can never confer: but Solitude,  
 judiciously employed, dissipates all the pangs  
 with which this passion tears the heart, and



affords a compensation for those pleasures which it takes away. Nor are all the consolations of life lost in Solitude to the bosom of an unhappy lover. He contemplates without regret the past pleasures of love; those short-lived pleasures which can no more return. The time arrives when he ceases to weep and suffer, and on the bed of death he exclaims with a tranquil sigh, "Oh! lovely object of my soul! if you should learn my fate, a love like mine may well deserve the tribute of a tear, and call one gentle sigh from your relenting heart. Forget my faults and while my virtues live, let my follies die, within your bosom!"

It was thus, in struggling against the prevalence of his passion, that PETRARCH rose to that sublimity, and acquired that richness of imagination, which distinguished his character. He acquired, even at this period, an ascendancy over the age in which he lived greater than any individual has since, in any country, been able to obtain. His mind passed with the happiest facility from grave to gay subjects; and he was enabled, when occasion required it, to adopt the boldest resolutions, and perform the most courageous actions. PETRARCH, who at the feet of women wept, sighed, and sobbed like a child; who only wrote on LAURA the soft and languishing verses which his passion inspired; no sooner turned his eyes towards ROME than his style assumed a bold and manly tone, and his letters were written with all the strength and spirit of the Augustan age. Monarchs\*, while

\* ROBERT King of Naples frequently relinquished the most serious affairs to read the works of PETRARCH, without thinking either of his meals or his bed.



they read his lyric poetry, have forgot the calls of hunger and the charms of sleep. At a more advanced period of his life, however, he was no longer the sighing Muse of Love, who only chaunted amorous verses at the feet of his relentless mistress; he was no longer an effeminate slave, who kissed the chains of an imperious female, from whom he only received marks of contempt and aversion; but with a republican intrepidity PETRARCH regenerated the love of liberty throughout Italy, and founded the alarm against tyranny and tyrants. A great statesman, a profound and judicious minister, he was continually consulted upon the most important affairs then transacting in Europe, and frequently employed in the most arduous negotiations. A zealous friend to humanity, he endeavoured upon all occasions to extinguish the torch of discord. Possessing an extraordinary genius, the greatest Princes solicited his company, endeavoured to form their minds from his opinions, and studied from his precepts the great art of rendering their subjects happy.

By these traits we discover that PETRARCH notwithstanding the violence of his passion, enjoyed all these advantages of Solitude. His visits to *Vaucluse* were not, as is generally conceived, that he might be nearer to LAURA; for LAURA resided altogether at *Avignon*; but that he might avoid the frowns of his mistress and the corruptions of the Court. Seated in his little garden, which was situated at the foot of a lofty mountain, and surrounded by a rapid stream, his soul rose superior to the adversities of his fate. He possessed indeed, by nature, a restless and unquiet mind; was frequently displeased because



he was not at some distant place, to which it was impossible he could ever go ; frequently because he looked in vain for something which it was impossible he should find. PETRARCH, in short, possessed all those defects which generally accompany men of genius. But in his moments of tranquility, a sound judgment, joined to an exquisite sensibility, enabled him to enjoy the delights of Solitude superior to any mortal that ever existed, either before or since his time ; and in these moments *Vaucluse* was, to his feelings, the Temple of Peace, the residence of calm repose, a safe harbour against all the tempests of the soul.

SOLITUDE, therefore, although it cannot always conquer LOVE, refines and sanctifies the most ardent flame. The passions which the God of nature originally planted in the heart of man, ought to remain undestroyed within his breast, but he should learn to direct them to their proper ends. If, therefore, you are inclined to be happier than PETRARCH, share the pleasures of your retirement with some amiable character, who, better than the cold precepts of philosophy, will beguile or banish by the charms of conversation all the cares and torments of life. A truly wise man has said, that the presence of one thinking being like ourselves, whose bosom glows with sympathy and love, so far from destroying the advantages of Solitude, renders them more favourable. If, like me, you owe your happiness to the fond affection of a wife, she will soon induce you to forget the society of men, by a tender and unreserved communication of every sentiment of her mind, of every secret feeling of her heart ; and the em-



ployments, the business, the vicissitudes of life  
 will render, by their variety, the subjects of con-  
 fidential discourse and sweet domestic converse  
 proportionably diversified. The orator who  
 speaks upon this subject with so much truth and  
 energy, must have felt with exquisite sensibility  
 the pleasures of domestic happiness.—“ Here,”  
 says he, “ every kind expression is remember-  
 “ ed; the emotion of one heart re-acts with  
 “ correspondent effects upon the other; every  
 “ thought is treasured up; every testimony of  
 “ affection returned; the happy pair enjoy in  
 “ each other’s company all the pleasures of the  
 “ mind, and there is no feeling which does not  
 “ communicate itself to their hearts. To be-  
 “ ings thus united by the sincerest affection and  
 “ the closest friendship, every thing that is said  
 “ or done, every wish and every event becomes  
 “ mutually important. Beings thus united, and  
 “ they alone, regard the advantages which they  
 “ severally possess, with a joy and satisfaction  
 “ untinctured by envy. It is only under such  
 “ an union that faults are pointed out with cau-  
 “ tious tenderness, and without ill-nature; that  
 “ looks bespeak the inclination of the soul;  
 “ that the gratification of every wish and de-  
 “ sire is anticipated; that every view and inten-  
 “ tion is assimilated; that the sentiments of the  
 “ one conform to those of the other; and that  
 “ each rejoices with cordiality at the smallest  
 “ advantage which the other acquires.”

Thus it is that Solitude which we share with  
 an amiable object procures us tranquility, satis-  
 faction, heartfelt joy; and the humblest cottage  
 becomes the dwelling-place of the purest plea-  
 sure. Love in the retreats of Solitude, while



the mind and the heart are in harmony with each other, is capable of preserving the noblest sentiments in the soul, of raising the understanding to the highest degree of elevation, of filling the bosom with new benevolence, of rooting out all the seeds of vice, of strengthening and extending all the virtues. The attacks of ill-humour are by this means subdued, the violence of the passions moderated, and the bitter cup of affliction sweetened. It is thus that a happy love renders Solitude serene, alleviates all the sufferings of the world, and strews the sweetest flowers along the paths of life.

Solitude frequently converts the deep anguish of distress into a soothing melancholy. Every thing which operates with gentleness on the soul is a salutary balm to a wounded heart. This is the reason why every malady of the body, every suffering of the mind, feels such sensible effects from the consolatory expressions, the kind affability, the interesting anxieties of a virtuous wife. Disgusted, alas ! by the treatment of the world, and displeased with every thing around me ; when satiety had weakened all the vigour and destroyed every energy of my soul ; when I no longer hoped for relief ; when grief concealed all the beauties of nature from my eyes, and rendered the whole universe a lifeless tomb, the kind attention of a WIFE conveyed a secret charm, a consolatory virtue to my mind. Oh ! nothing can so sweetly soften all our sufferings as a conviction that WOMAN is not indifferent to our fate.

Rural scenery, of a thousand different kinds, afford to the distracted bosom the same tranquillity which the attentions and conversations



of an amiable wife procure to a sick and suffering husband, and change all the afflictions of his soul, all the oppressions of his mind, into the softest sorrow and the mildest grief.

Solitude frequently inspires a soft melancholy even in persons of the tenderest years. Young females from fifteen to eighteen years of age, who possess fine sensibilities and lively imaginations, experience this disposition, when, in the retirement of rural life, they feel the first desires of Love; when, wandering every where in search of a beloved object, they sigh for one alone, although their hearts have not yet fixed on any particular object of affection. I have frequently seen these species of melancholy without any other symptoms of malady. Rousseau was attacked with it at VEVAY upon the banks of the Lake of GENEVA. "My heart," says he, "rushed with ardour from my bosom  
"into a thousand innocent felicities: melting  
"to tenderness, I sighed and wept like a child.  
"How frequently, stopping to indulge my feelings, and seating myself on a piece of broken  
"rock, did I amuse myself with seeing my  
"tears drop into the stream!" I cannot myself transcribe these lines without shedding tears on recollecting, that in the seventeenth year of my age I frequently seated myself with similar agitation under the peaceful shades of those delightful shores. Love relieved my pains; Love, so sweetly enjoyed among the groves which adorn the banks of the Lake of GENEVA\*;

\* There is no native, or indeed any person possessing sensibility, of whatever country he may be, who has ever beheld without feeling the tenderest emotion the delightful borders of the Lake of Geneva; the enchanting spectacle which nature there exhibits; and the vast and majestic



Love, the only disease which Solitude cannot cure; and which indeed we willingly endure without wishing for relief. To suffer with so much softness and tranquility; to indulge in tender sorrow without exactly knowing why, and still to prefer retirement; to love the lonely margin of a limped lake; to wander alone upon broken rocks, in deep caverns, in dreary forests; to feel no pleasures but in the sublime and beautiful of nature, in those beauties which the world despise; to desire the company of only one other being to whom we may communicate the sensations of the soul, who would participate in all our pleasures, and forget everything else in the universe; this is a condition which every young man ought to wish for, who wishes to fly from the merciless approaches of a cold old age\*.

It is not, however, to every species of affliction that Solitude will afford relief. Oh my beloved HIRCHFIELD! I can never restrain my tears from flowing with increased abundance, whenever I read, in thy immortal work upon the pleasures of a country life, the following affecting passage, which always sinks deeply into my heart: "The tears of affliction dry up under the sympathizing breath of ZEPHYRS: the heart expands, and only feels a tranquil sorrow. The bloom of nature presents itself to our eyes on every side; and in the enjoy-horizon which that mass of water presents to the view. Who has ever returned from this scene without turning back his eyes on this interesting picture, and experiencing the same affliction with which the heart separates from a beloved friend whom we have no expectation ever to see again!

\* This reflection of PETRARCH is very affecting and very just. "*Illos annos egi tantâ in requie, tantâque dulcedine, ut illud ferme tempus solum mihi vita fuerit, reliquum omne supplicium.*"



“ment of its fragrance we feel relief from woe.  
“Every sad and sorrowful idea gradually dis-  
“appears. The mind no longer rejects conso-  
“latory meditations; and as the evening sun  
“absorbs the damp vapours of a rainy day, a  
“happy tranquility dissipates the troubles of  
“the soul, and disposes us to enjoy the peace-  
“ful charms of rural life.”

There are, however, bosoms so alive to misfortune, that the continual remembrance of those who were once dear to their hearts, preys upon their vitals, and by slow degrees consumes their lives. The reading of a single line written by the hand they loved, freezes their blood: the very sight of the tomb which has swallowed up the remains of all their soul held dear, is intolerable to their eyes. On such beings, alas! the Heavens smile in vain. The early violet and the twittering birds proclaiming, with the approach of spring, the regeneration of all nature, bring no charms to them. The garden's variagated hues irritate their feelings, and they behold those retreats to which they were kindly invited to sooth the violence of their distress, with horror during the remainder of their lives. They refuse to follow the compassionate hand extended to lead them from their house of sorrow to the verdant plains of happiness and peace. Such characters generally possess warm and strong passions; but the fineness of their feelings becomes a real malady; and they require to be treated with great attention and with constant kindness.

On the contrary, Solitude conveys most powerful charms to softer minds, although the loss they have experienced may not have been less.



They feel their misfortunes in their full extent ; but their feelings partake of the tranquility of their nature ; they plant upon the fatal tomb the weeping willow and the ephemeral rose, as striking emblems of their sorrow and misfortune ; they erect mausoleums, and compose funeral dirges ; their hearts are continually occupied by the idea of those whom their eyes deplore, and they exist, under the sensations of the truest and most sincere sorrow, in a kind of middle state between earth and heaven. Such characters, I am conscious, feel misfortunes to their full extent ; but their sorrows, provided they are undisturbed, appear to me of the happiest kind. I do not pretend to say their sorrows are insincere, or that their grief is less than that of those who give themselves up to fits of violence, and sink under the pressure of their misfortunes ; this would be a species of stupidity ; an enormity, of the consequences of which I am fully sensible : but I call them happy mourners, because their constitutions are so framed, that their grief and sorrow do not diminish the force and energy of their minds. They find enjoyments in those things from which minds of a different texture would feel aversion. They feel celestial joys in the unceasing recollection of those persons whose loss they deplore.

Every adversity of life is much more easily overcome in SOLITUDE than in THE WORLD, provided the soul will nobly bend its flight towards a different object. When a man thinks that he has no resources but in DESPAIR or DEATH, he deceives himself ; for despair is no resource. Let him retire to his study, and there seriously trace out the consequences of some settled truth, and his tears will no longer fall,



the weight of his misfortunes will grow light, and the pangs of sorrow fly from his breast.

In Solitude the most trifling emotions of the heart, every appearance of domestic felicity or rural pleasure, drives away impatience and ill-humour. ILL-HUMOUR is an uneasy and insupportable condition, which the soul frequently falls into when soured by a number of thole petty vexations which we daily experience in every step of our progress through life ; but we need only to shut the door in order to avoid this scourge of happiness. IMPATIENCE is a stifled anger, which men silently manifest by looks and gestures, and weak minds ordinarily reveal by a shower of complaints. A grumbler is never farther from his proper sphere than when he is in company ; Solitude is his only asylum.

Vexations however of almost every kind are much sooner healed in the tranquility of retirement than in the noise of the world. When we have attained a cheerful disposition, and do not suffer any thing to thwart, restrain or sour the temper of our minds ; when we have learned the art of vanquishing ourselves, no worldly vexations can then obstruct our happiness. The deepest melancholy and most settled weariness of life have by these means been frequently banished from the breast. The progress to this end is, in truth, much more rapid in women than in men. The mind of a lively female flies immediately to happiness, while that of a melancholy man still creeps on with pain. The soft bosoms of the fair are easily elevated or depressed ; but these effects must be produced by means less abstracted than Solitude ; by something that will strike their senses, and by their assistance penetrate to the heart. On the contrary, the mental



diseases of men augment by slow degrees, take deeper root, lay stronger hold for the breast, and to drive them away, it is necessary to apply the most efficacious remedies with unshaken constancy ; for here feeble prescriptions are of no avail. The only chance of success is by exerting every endeavour to place the body under the regimen of the mind. Vigorous minds frequently banish the most inveterate evils, or form a powerful shield against all the darts of fate, and by braving every danger, drive away those feelings by which others are irritated and destroyed. They boldly turn their eyes from what things are, to what they ought to be ; and with determined resolution support the bodies they are designed to animate, while weaker minds surrender every thing committed to their care.

The soul, however, always yields to those circumstances which are most agreeable to its peculiar character. The gaming-table, luxurious feasts, and brilliant assemblies, are the most palatable aliments, the most pleasing comforts to the generality of men ; while the bosoms of those who sigh for Solitude, from a consciousness of all the advantages it affords, feel no tranquility or enjoyment but in peaceful shades.

These reflections upon the advantages which the heart derives from Solitude bring me, at last, to this important question : Whether it is easier to live VIRTUOUSLY in SOLITUDE or in THE WORLD ?

In society, the virtues are frequently practised from a mere sense of duty. THE CLERGY feel it their duty to afford instruction to the ignorant, and consolation to the afflicted. THE JUDGES think it their duty to render justice to the injured or oppressed. The PHYSICIAN pays his visits



to the sick, and cures them, ill, or well; and all for the sake of HUMANITY, say these gentlemen. But all this is false; the clergy afford consolation, the lawyer renders justice, the physician cures, not always from the decided inclination of the heart, but because he must, because his duty requires it, because the one must do honour to his gown, the other is placed in the seat of justice, and the third has pledged his skill on such and such prognostics. The words "*your known humanity*," which always shock my feelings, and are introductory to the contents of a thousand letters I have received, are nothing more than the style of custom, a common flattery and falsehood. HUMANITY is a virtue, a nobleness of soul of the highest rank; and how can any one know whether I do such and such things from the love of virtue, or because I am bound by duty to perform them?

GOOD WORKS, therefore, are not always acts of VIRTUE. The heart of that man who never detaches himself from the affairs of the world, is frequently shut against every thing that is good. It is possible to do good, and not be virtuous, for a man may be great in his actions and little in his heart\*. Virtue is a quality much more rare than is generally imagined. It is therefore necessary to be frugal of the words *humanity*, *virtue*, *patriotism*, and others of the same import; they ought only to be mentioned upon great occasions; for by too frequent use their meaning is weakened, and the qualities they describe brought into contempt. Who would not blush to be called *learned* or *humane*, when he hears the

\* "*Viri potestatibus sublimes*," says Lord Chancellor BACON, "*ipsi tibi ignoti sunt. Et dum negotiis distrabuntur, tempore carent, quo sanitati aut corporis aut animæ sue consulant.*"



knowledge of so many ignorant persons boasted of, and "*the well-known humanity*" of so many villains praised?

The probability is, that men will do more good in the retreats of Solitude than in the world. In fact, a virtuous man, of whatever description he may be, is not virtuous in consequence of example, for virtuous examples are unhappily too rarely seen in the world, but because in the silence of reflection he feels that the pleasures of a good heart surpass every other, and constitute the true happiness of life. The greater part, therefore, of virtuous actions are exercised in silence and obscurity.

VIRTUOUS ACTIONS are more easily and more freely performed in Solitude than in the world. In Solitude no man blushes at the sight of Virtue, but in the world she drags on an obscure existence, and seems afraid to shew her face in public. The intercourse of the world is the education of vice. Men possessed of the best inclinations are surrounded by so many snares and dangers, that they all commit some fault every day of their lives. One man who plays a first-rate character upon the theatre of the world, is deficient in virtuous inclinations; in another of the same class, his inclinations are good while his actions are vicious. In the chamber, before we engage in the complicated business of the day, we are, perhaps, kind, impartial, and candid, for then the current of our tempers has received no contradiction; but with the greatest attention, with the most scrupulous vigilance, it is impossible to continue through the day completely masters of ourselves, oppressed as we are with cares and vexations, obliged to conform to a series of disgusting circumstances, to give au-



dience to a multitude of men, and to endure a thousand absurd and unexpected accidents which distract the mind. The folly, therefore, of mystic minds was, in forgetting that their souls were subjected to a body, and aiming, in consequence of that error, at the highest point of speculative virtue. The nature of human beings cannot be altered merely by living in a hermitage. The exercise of virtue is only easy in those situations where it is not exposed to danger, and then it loses all its merit. God created many hermits too weak to save themselves when plunged into the abyss, because he rendered them strong enough not to fall into it.

I shall here subjoin an excellent observation of a celebrated Scotch Philosopher—"It is the peculiar effect of virtue to make a man's chief happiness arise from himself and his own conduct. A bad man is wholly the creature of the world. He hangs upon its favour, lives by its smiles, and is happy or miserable in proportion to his success. But to a virtuous man, success in worldly undertakings is but a secondary object. To discharge his own part with integrity and honour, is his chief aim. If he has done properly what was incumbent on him to do, his mind is at rest; to Providence he leaves the event. *His witness is in heaven, and his record is on high.* Satisfied with the approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience, he enjoys himself, and despises the triumphs of guilt. In proportion as such manly principles rule your heart, you will become independent of the world, and will forbear complaining of its discouragements."



To recommend this independence of the world is the first aim and only end of the little philosophy which may be found in this treatise upon SOLITUDE. It is not my doctrine to lead men into the deserts or to place their residence, like that of owls, in the hollow trunks of trees; but I would willing remove from their minds the excessive fear of men and of the world. I would, as far as it is practicable, render them independent; I would break their fetters, inspire them with a contempt of public society, and devote their minds to the love of SOLITUDE, in order that they may be able to say, at least during the course of two hours in a day, "*We are free.*"

Such a state of independence cannot be displeasing even to the greatest enemies of LIBERTY; for it simply carries the mind to a rational use of Solitude. It is by the recollection of the soul, by the mind's strengthening itself in these pure and noble sentiments, that we are rendered more able and more anxious to fill our respective stations in life with propriety.

The true apostles of Solitude have said, "It is only by employing with propriety the hours of a happy leisure, that we adopt firm and solid resolutions to govern our mind and guide our actions. It is there, only, that we can quietly reflect upon the transactions of life, upon the temptations to which we are most exposed, upon those weaker sides of the heart which we ought to guard with the most unceasing care, and previously arm ourselves against whatever is dangerous in our commerce with mankind. Perhaps though virtue may appear, at first sight, to contract the bounds of enjoyment, you will find upon reflection, that in truth it enlarges them; if it restrains



“ the excess of some pleasures, it favours and  
“ encreases others ; it precludes you from none  
“ but such are either fantastic and imaginary,  
“ or pernicious and destructive.”—“ The rich  
“ proprietary loves to amuse himself in a con-  
“ templation of his wealth, the voluptuary in  
“ his entertainments, the man of the world with  
“ his friends and his assemblies ; but the truly  
“ good man finds his pleasure in the scrupulous  
“ discharge of the august duties of life. He  
“ sees a new sun shining before him ; thinks him-  
“ self surrounded by a more pure and lively  
“ splendour ; every object is embellished, and he  
“ gaily pursues his career. He who penetrates  
“ into the secret causes of things, who reads in  
“ the respectable obscurity of a wise Solitude,  
“ will return us public thanks. We immediately  
“ acquit ourselves more perfectly in business, we  
“ resist with greater ease the temptations of vice,  
“ and we owe all these advantages to the pious  
“ recollection which Solitude inspires, to our  
“ separation from mankind, and to our indepen-  
“ dence of the world.”

Liberty, leisure, a quiet conscience, and a retirement from the world, are therefore the surest and most infallible means to arrive at virtue. Under such circumstances, it is not necessary to restrain the passions merely to prevent them from disturbing the public order, or to abate the fervor of imagination ; for in our review of things we willingly leave them as they are, because we have learned to laugh at their absurdity. Domestic life is no longer, as in the gay world, a scene of languor and disgust, the field of battle to every base and brutal passion, the dwelling of envy, vexation, and ill-humour. PEACE and HAPPINESS inhabit those bosoms that renounce the



poisonous springs of pleasure ; and the mind is thereby rendered capable of communicating its purest joys to all around. He who shuns the contaminated circles of the vicious, who flies from the insolent looks of proud stupidity and the arrogance of successful villainy ; who beholds the void which all the idle entertainments and vain pretensions of public life leave within the breast, is never discontented or disturbed at home.

The pleasures of the world lose their charms on every sacrifice made in Solitude at the altar of Virtue. " I love rather to shed tears myself " than to make others shed them," said a German lady to me one day. She did not seem conscious that it is almost impossible either to say or do any thing more generous. Virtue like this affords more real content to the heart than all the amusements which are hourly sought to destroy time, and steal the bosom from itself. The mind is always happy in finding itself capable of exercising faculties which it was not before conscious it possessed. Solitude opens the soul to every noble pleasure ; fills it with intelligence, serenity, calmness, and content, when we expected nothing but tears of sorrow ; and repairs every misfortune by a thousand new and unalterable delights.

There is not a villain in existence whose mind does not silently acknowledge that VIRTUE is the corner stone of all felicity in the world, as well as in Solitude. Vice, however is continually spreading her silken nets ; ensnaring multitudes of every rank and every station. To watch all the seductive inclinations of the heart, not only when they are present but while they yet lie dormant in the breast, to vanquish every desire



by employing the mind in the pursuit of noble pleasures, has ever been considered the greatest conquest which the soul is capable of gaining over the world and itself ; and inward peace has ever been the price of this victory.

Happy is the man who carries with him into Solitude this inward peace of mind, and there preserves it unaltered. Of what service would it be to leave the town, and seek the calmness and tranquility of retirement, if misanthropy still lurks within the heart, and we there continue our sacrifices to this fatal passion? Divine content, a calm and open countenance, will in such circumstances, be as difficult to find in the flower-embellished meadows as in the deepest night of Solitude, or in the silent shades of obscure cells. To purify and protect the heart is the first and last duty which we have to perform in Solitude : this task once accomplished our happiness is secure, for we have then learned the value of the tranquility, the leisure, and the liberty we enjoy. Hatred to mankind ought not to be the cause of our leaving the world ; we may shun their society, and still maintain our wishes for their felicity.

An essential portion of the happiness which we taste in Solitude arises from our ability to appreciate things according to their true value, independently of the public opinion. When Rome, after the conquest of the Pirates, removed LUCULLUS from the head of the army, in order to give the command of it to POMPEY, resigning by this act the government of the empire to the discretion of a single man, that artful citizen beat his breast, as a sign of grief at being invested with the honour, and exclaimed, " Alas " is there no end to my conflicts? How much



“better would it have been to have remained  
 “one of the undistinguished Many, than to be  
 “perpetually engaged in war, and have my bo-  
 “dy continually locked in armour! Shall I ne-  
 “ver be able to fly from envy to a rural retreat,  
 “to domestic happiness, and conjugal endear-  
 “ments?”—POMPEY spoke his true sentiments  
 in the language of dissimulation; for he had not  
 yet learned really to esteem that, which all men  
 possessed of native ambition and the lust of power  
 despise; nor did he yet condemn that which at  
 this period of the republic every Roman who  
 was eager to command esteemed more than all  
 other things; unlike MANIUS CURIUS, the  
 greatest Roman of his age, who, after having  
 vanquished several warlike nations, driven  
 PYRRHUS out of Italy, and enjoyed three times  
 the honours of a triumph\*, retired to his cot-  
 tage in the country, and with his own victorious  
 hands cultivated his little farm. To this spot  
 the Ambassadors of the *Samnites* came to offer  
 him a large present of gold, and found him seat-  
 ed in the chimney corner dressing turnips†.

No king or prince was ever so happy as was  
 MANIUS CURIUS in the humble employment of  
 dressing his turnips. Princes know too well that  
 under many circumstances they are deprived of  
 friends; and this is the reason why they ask the  
 advice of many, but confide in none. The ho-

\* MANIUS CURIUS DENTATUS triumphed twice in his  
 first Consulate in the 463d year of Rome; first over the *Sam-  
 nites*, and afterwards over the *Sabines*; and eight years after-  
 wards, in his third Consulate, he triumphed over PYRRHUS.  
 After this he led up the less Triumph, called *Ovation*, for his  
 victory over the *Lucanians*.

† DENTATUS absolutely refused the present, and gave the  
 Ambassadors this answer: “A man who can be satisfied with  
 “such a supper has no need of gold; and I think it more glo-  
 “rious to conquer the owners of it than to possess it myself.”



nest subjects of a nation, every man of reflection and good sense, pities the condition of virtuous Sovereigns: for even the best of Sovereigns are not altogether exempt from fears, jealousies, and torments. Their felicity never equals that of a laborious and contented husbandman: their pleasures are not so permanent; they never experience the same tranquility and content. The provisions of a peasant are coarse, but to his appetite they are delicious: his bed is hard, but he goes to it fatigued by the honest labours of the day, and sleeps sounder on his mat of straw than monarchs on their beds of down.

The pleasures of Solitude are enjoyed by every description of men, without exception of rank or fortune. The freshness of the breeze, the magnificence of the forests, the rich tints of the meadows, the inexhaustible variety which summer spreads over the face of all nature, enchant not only philosophers, kings, and heroes, but the beautiful picture ravishes the mind of the most ignorant spectator with exquisite delight. An English author has very justly observed, "It is not necessary that he who looks with pleasure on the colours of a flower should study the principles of vegetation, or that the *Ptolemaick* and *Copernican* system should be compared, before the light of the sun can gladden, or its warmth invigorate. Novelty is itself a source of gratification; and *Milton* justly observes, that to him who has been long pent up in cities, no rural object can be presented which will not delight or refresh some of his senses."

Exiles themselves have frequently felt the advantages and enjoyments of Solitude. To supply the place of the world from which they are banished, they create in retirement a new world.



for themselves ; forget those factitious pleasures exclusively attached to the condition of THE GREAT ; habituate themselves to others of a nobler kind, more worthy the attention of a rational being\* ; and to pass their days in tranquillity find out a thousand little felicities, which are only to be met with at a distance from all society, far removed from all consolation, far from their country, their family, and their friends.

But to procure happiness, Exiles, like other men, must fix their minds upon some one object ; they must adopt some particular pursuit capable of creating future hopes or of affording immediate pleasure. Exiles, alas ! aspire to the attainment of happiness, and would still live for the sake of virtue.

MAURICE Prince of ISENBURG distinguished himself by his courage, during a service of twenty years, under FERDINAND Duke of BRUNSWICK and Marshal BROGLIO, in the wars between the RUSSIANS and the TURKS. Health and repose were sacrificed to the gratification of his ambition and love of glory. During his service in the Russian army he fell under the displeasure of the empress, and was sent into exile. The nature of exile in Russia is well known ; but he contrived to render even a Russian banishment agreeable. At first, his mind and his body were oppressed by the sorrows and disquietudes of his situation ; and his life became a mere shadow. The little work written by LORD BOLINGBROKE upon EXILE fell accidentally into his hands. He read it several times ; and “ in proportion to the number of times I

\* CICERO says, “ *Multa præclare DIONYSIUS PHALEREUS in illo exilio scripsit, non in usum aliquem suum, quo erat orator batus ; sed animi cultus ille, erat ei quasi quidam humanitatis cibus.* ”



“read,” said THE PRINCE, in the preface of the elegant and nervous translation which he made of the work, “I felt all my sorrows and disquietudes vanish.”

The treatise of LORD BOLINGBROKE upon the subject of EXILE is a master-piece of Stoic philosophy and fine writing. He there boldly examines adversities of his past and present life. Instead of flying from them, or enduring them with lingering and shameful patience, he endeavours to conquer them. Instead of palliatives, he advises the knife and the caustic; he probes the wound to the bottom to obtain a radical cure.

The mind, without doubt, strengthens its powers under the circumstances of perpetual banishment in the same manner as in uninterrupted Solitude: and habit supplies the necessary power to support its misfortune. To exiles who are inclined to indulge all the pleasing emotions of the heart, Solitude, indeed, becomes an easy situation; for they there experience pleasures which were before unknown; and from that moment forget those which they tasted in the happier situations of life. When BRUTUS saw MARCELLUS in exile at MYTELENE, he found him surrounded by the highest felicity of which human nature is susceptible, and devoted, as before his banishment, to the study of every useful science. The sight made so deep an impression on his mind, that when he was again returning into the world, he felt that it was BRUTUS who was going into exile, and not MARCELLUS whom he left behind.

Some years before QUINTUS METELLUS NUMIDUS suffered the same fate, at the time when the people conducted by MARIUS laid the



foundation of that tyranny which CÆSAR afterwards erected, METELLUS singly in the midst of an alarmed senate, and surrounded by an enraged populace, refused to take the oath imposed by the pernicious laws of the Tribune SATURNINUS. His immoveable firmness was considered a crime, and exile was its punishment. A mad and furious party gained the ascendancy. The most virtuous of the citizens, indeed, took up arms in his defence, resolutely determined to perish rather than live to see their country deprived of so much virtue; but this generous Roman, who had resisted all the exhortations of his friends not to expose himself to the dreadful penalties of his refusal, thought it a duty which he owed to the laws not to suffer any sedition to take place; he contented himself with lamenting that frenzy which had seized the public mind, as PLATO had before lamented the madness of the Athenians: "Either matters," said he, "will take a better turn, and the people  
 "repent and recall me, or, if they continue the  
 "same, it will be best to be at a distance from  
 "Rome." Without regret therefore he resigned himself to banishment, fully convinced of its advantages to a heart incapable of finding repose except on foreign shores; a heart which, if he had continued at ROME, must have been incessantly torn to pieces by the sight of a miserable senate and an expiring republic.

RUTILIUS also withdrew himself from the corrupted city of ROME with equal contempt for the sentiments and the manners of the age. He had defended Asia against the extortions of the Collectors. This generosity irritated the Equestrian Order, and motives equally base ex-



asperated MARIUS's party against him. The most virtuous and innocent citizen of the republic was accused of corruption, and dragged to the bar of justice by the vile and infamous APICIUS. The authors of this unfounded prosecution sat in judgment on RUTILIUS, who was of course most unjustly condemned, for he scarcely condescended to defend the cause. Seeking an asylum in ASIA, this venerable Roman, whose ungrateful country was ignorant of his merit, was received there with every mark of affection and respect. Before the term of his banishment expired, he shewed still greater contempt to ROME: for when SYLLA would have recalled him, he not only refused to return, but made the place of his residence at a greater distance.

To all these instances of happy and contented exiles, CICERO is a memorable exception. He possessed all the resources, all the sentiments necessary to draw the greatest advantages from Solitude; but he had not sufficient strength of mind to support himself under the adversity of banishment. CICERO, the saviour of his country, during his prosperity was neither deterred by the menaces of a dangerous faction, nor alarmed at the poignard of the assassin; but his courage failed him when his misfortunes commenced. He had before lamented the weakness of his constitution, but after exile he became quite dejected, and when that once happens all power of mind is gone; the soul immediately loses all its energies, and becomes equally incapable of suggesting vigorous measures or of performing heroic actions. CICERO and his melancholy have dishonoured both Exile and Solitude. Not knowing where to go or what to do, as time



rous as a female, as capricious as a child, he regretted the loss of his rank, his riches, and his power. He wept over the ruins of his house, which the fury of *CLODIUS* had levelled with the ground; and poured forth groans for the absence of *TARENTIA*, whom he soon afterwards repudiated. Such are the fatal effects of a melancholy mind: it deplores, with bitter lamentation, the loss of those things in the possession of which it places no value. The friends and enemies of *CICERO* united in believing that misfortune had disordered his brain. *CÆSAR* saw with secret satisfaction the man who had refused to be his colleague weep under the scourge of *CLODIUS*. *POMPEY* hoped that his ingratitude would be effaced by the contempt to which the friend he so carelessly abandoned exposed himself. Even *ATTICUS*, whose highest gratification was usury and magnificence, who without connecting himself to any party was intimate with all, blushed for the conduct of *CICERO*, thought that he attached himself too servilely to his former fortunes, and reproached him with the severity of a *CATO*. Solitude lost all its influence over *CICERO*, because weak and melancholy sentiments continually depressed his mind, and turned the worst side of every object to his view. He died, however, like a hero, and not like a dejected coward. "Approach, old soldier," cried he from his litter to *POMPILIUS LOENAS*, his client and his murderer, "and, if you have the courage, take my life."

A man under the adversity of banishment cannot hope to see his days glide quietly away in rural delights and philosophic repose, except he has honourably discharged those duties which



he owed to the world, and given that bright example to future ages, which every character exhibits who is as great after his fall as he was at the most brilliant period of his prosperity.

SOLITUDE affords an unalterable felicity under the pressures of old age, and in the decline of life. The life of man is a voyage of short duration, and his old age a fleeting day. The mind is enabled by Solitude to forget the tempests of which it was so long the sport: OLD AGE therefore, if we consider it as the time of repose, as an interval between the affairs of this world and the higher concerns of death, an harbour from whence we quietly view rocks on which we were in danger of being wrecked, is, perhaps, the most agreeable period of our lives.

The human mind is in general anxious to draw its knowledge from every distant object, before it applies to its own resources. We therefore frequently begin our travels in other nations, before we have seen whatever is interesting in our own. But discreet youth and experienced age conduct themselves upon different principles. To both the one and the other Solitude and self-examination are the beginning and the end of WISDOM. If Solitude depresses the spirits of youth, and renders manhood melancholy, it frequently drives away the depression which accompanies old age.

The history of our first entrance into life consists of a continual succession of hopes, wishes, and illusions: the succeeding years are an age of vexation and sorrow. But the mind of a man who has learnt wisdom from experience cannot be either shaken or surprized. He who



is no longer obliged to labour for the means of supporting life, and who has been long acquainted with the secret practices and sinister dealings of the world, makes no complaints of the ingratitude with which his labours and anxiety have been rewarded: all he asks for is tranquility and repose; and if he has made any advances in the knowledge of himself, if he has been obliged at an early period of his life to become wise, he reckons every thing else of no value.

It is a very just observation of a celebrated German, that there are *political* as well as religious *Chartreux*, and that both the one and the other Order are frequently the best and most pious of men. "It is within the most retired shades of the forest," says this writer, "that we meet with the peaceful sage and tranquil observer, the friend of truth, the lover of his country, who neither deifies nor calumniates. Mankind admire his wisdom, enjoy the beams of his knowledge, adore his love of truth, and his affection to his fellow-creatures. They are anxious to gain his confidence and his friendship; and are as much astonished at the wisdom which proceeds from his lips, and the rectitude which accompanies all his actions, as they are at the obscurity of his name, and the mode of his existence. They endeavour to draw him from his Solitude, and place him on the throne; but they immediately perceive inscribed upon his forehead, beaming with sacred fire, "*Odi profanum vulgus et arceo*," and, instead of being his *seducers*, they become his *Profelytes*.



But, alas! this political *Chartreux* is no more: I saw him formerly in WETERAVIA. His animated figure, while it announced the highest degree of wisdom and the happiest tranquility, filled my bosom with respect and filial love. There did not, perhaps, at that time exist a character more profound in any German Court; he was intimately acquainted with all, and corresponded personally with some of the most celebrated Sovereigns of Europe. I never found, in any situation, an observer who penetrated with so much skill and certainty into the thoughts and actions of other men; who had formed such true opinions of the world in general, and of those who played the most important characters on its theatre: never was a mind more free, more open, more energetic, or more mild: an eye more lively and penetrating: I never, in short, knew a man in whose company I could have lived with higher pleasure, or died with greater comfort. The place of his retirement in the country was modest and simple; his grounds without art, and his table frugal. The charm which I felt in this retreat of WETERAVIA, the residence of the venerable BARON DE SEHAUTENBACH, is inexpressible.

Did youth ever possess more energy and fire, were the hours of Solitude ever better employed, than by ROUSSEAU during the latter years of his life? It was in his old age that he wrote the greater and the best parts of his works. The poor philosopher, when he felt himself verging to the period of his existence, endeavoured to find tranquility of heart among the shades of Solitude; but his endeavours were in vain.



ROUSSEAU had experienced too frequently the fury of those who are enemies to truth; his feelings had been too frequently exposed to the severest and most unremitted persecutions. Before he discovered the danger of his situation, he had suffered, as well from his weak constitution as from the little care he had taken of his health, a long and painful sickness. In the last years of his life the effects of melancholy and chagrin were more apparent than ever. He frequently fainted, and talked wildly when he was ill. "All that ROUSSEAU wrote during his old age," says one of our refined critics, "was nonsense."—"Yes," replied his fair friend with greater truth, "but he wrote nonsense so agreeably, that we sometimes like to talk nonsense with him."

Old age appears to be the properest season of meditation. The ardent fire of youth it stifled, the meridian heat of life's short day, is passed, and succeeded by the soft tranquility and refreshing quietude of the evening. It is therefore useful to devote some time to meditation before we leave the world, whenever we can procure an interval of repose. The thought alone of the arrival of this happy period recreates the mind; it is the first fine day of Spring after a long and dreary Winter.

PETRARCH scarcely perceived the approaches of old age. By constant activity he rendered his retirement always happy, and every year passed in pleasure and tranquility unperceived away. From a little verdant harbour in the neighbourhood of a Carthusian monastery, he wrote to his friend SERRIMO with a *naïveté* unknown to modern manners: "Like a wearied



“ traveller, I increase my pace in proportion as  
“ I draw nearer the end of my journey. I  
“ read and write night and day; they alter-  
“ nately relieve each other. These are my  
“ only occupations, and the source of all my  
“ pleasures. I lie awake a great part of the  
“ night. I labour, I divert my mind, and  
“ make every effort in my power: the more  
“ difficulties I encounter, the more my ardour  
“ encreases: novelty incites; obstacles sharpen  
“ me: the labour is certain; but the success  
“ precarious. My eyes are dimmed by watch-  
“ ings; my hand tired of holding the pen. My  
“ wish is, that posterity may know me. If I  
“ do not succeed in this wish, the age in which  
“ I live, or at least the friends who have known  
“ me, will do me justice, and that is sufficient.  
“ My health is so good, my constitution so ro-  
“ bust, my temperament is so warm, that neither  
“ the maturity of age, the most serious occu-  
“ pations, the habit of continency, nor the  
“ power of time, can vanquish the rebellious  
“ enemy which I am obliged incessantly to at-  
“ tack. I rely upon providence, without which,  
“ as it has frequently happened before, I should  
“ certainly become its victim. At the end of  
“ winter I frequently take up arms against the  
“ flesh; and am even at this moment fighting  
“ for my liberty against its most dangerous  
“ enemy.”

In old age, the most obscure retirement in the country adds still greater glory to those ardent and energetic minds who fly from the world to terminate their career in Solitude. Though far removed from the theatre of their fame, they shine with higher lustre than in the



days of their youth. "It is in Solitude, in exile, " on the bed of death," says POPE, "that the " noblest characters of antiquity shone with the " greatest splendour; it was then that they per- " formed the greatest services; for they then " communicated their knowledge to mankind."

ROUSSEAU may be included in this observati- on. "It is certainly doing some service," says he, "to give men an example of the life which " they ought to lead. It is certainly useful; " when all power of mind or strength of body " is decayed, boldly to make men listen to the " voice of truth from retirement. It is of some " service to inform men of the absurdity of " those opinions which render them miserable. " I should be much more useless to my coun- " trymen living amongst them, than I can be in " the occasion of my retreat. Of what import- " ance is it where I live, if I act as I ought to " act?"

But a young lady of Germany did not under- stand things in this way. She maintained that ROUSSEAU was a dangerous seducer of the youthful mind; and that he had acted extreme- ly wrong in discovering in his *Confessions* all his faults, his vicious inclinations, and the worst side of his heart. Such a work written by a man of virtue would be immediately decried; but ROUSSEAU, by whose writings the wicked are so captivated, in his story of the *Ruban volé* evinces a heart of the blackest dye! There are a thousand passages in that book from which we may clearly see that his pen was guided by va- nity alone, and others where we feel that he ut- ters sentiments against his own conviction.



There is nothing, in short, throughout the work which bears the mark of truth : all that we learn from it is, that MADAME DE WARENS was the original from which ROUSSEAU copied his JULIA. The *Confessions* of ROUSSEAU, generally speaking, contain a great many fine words with very few good thoughts. If, instead of rejecting every opportunity of advancing himself in life, ROUSSEAU had engaged in any kind of trade, he would have been more useful to the world than he has been by the publications of his dangerous writings.

This incomparable criticism upon ROUSSEAU merits preservation, because I believe it is the only one of its kind. The *Confessions* of ROUSSEAU are certainly not proper for the eye of youth ; but to me they are works as replete with philosophy, and as worthy of attention, as any the present age has produced. Their inimitable style and enchanting tints are their least merit. The remotest posterity will read the *Confessions* of ROUSSEAU, without asking how old the author was when he gave to the age in which he lived this last instance of the sincerity of his heart.

The days of a virtuous old man, who has attained to the perfection of his pleasures, flow on with uninterrupted gaiety ; he then receives the reward for the good actions he has performed, and carries with him the benedictions of all around him. The eye is never afraid to review the transactions of an honourable and virtuous life. The energetic mind never shudders at the sight of a tomb. The Empress MARIA THERESA has caused her own mauso-



leum to be erected; and frequently stops to view a monument, the dreadful thoughts of which so few can bear: she points it out to the observation of her children, and says, "Is it possible for us to be arrogant, when we here behold what, in the course of a few years, will become the depository of Emperors?"

There are few men who think with so much sublimity. Every one, however, may retire from the world, appreciate the past by its just value, and during the remainder of his days cultivate and extend the knowledge he has acquired. The TOMB will then lose its menacing aspect; and man will look upon death like the closing evening of a fine day.

The pure enjoyments of the heart frequently engender religious ideas, which reciprocally augment the pleasures of Solitude. A simple, innocent, and tranquil life qualifies the heart to raise itself towards God. The contemplation of nature disposes the mind to religious devotion, and the highest effect of religion is tranquility.

When the heart is penetrated with true sentiments of religion, the world loses all its charms, and the bosom feels with less anguish the miseries and torments attached to humanity. You live continually in verdant meadows, and see yourself surrounded by the fresh springs, upon the borders of which the Shepherd of ISRAEL fed his flocks. The tumultuous hurry of the world appears like thunder rolling at a distance; like the murmuring noise of distant waters, the course of which you perceive, and whose waves break against the rock upon which you are safely seated. When ADDISON perceived that he was



given over by his physicians, and felt his end approaching, he sent for a young man of a disposition naturally good, and who was extremely sensible of the loss with which he was threatened. He arrived; but ADDISON, who was extremely feeble, and whose life at this moment hung quivering on his lips, observed a profound silence. After a long pause the youth at length addressed him, "Sir, you desired to see me; signify your commands, and I will execute them with religious punctuality." ADDISON took him by the hand, and replied in his dying voice, "Observe with what tranquility a Christian can die\*."

Such is the consolation and tranquility which religion affords; such is the peace of mind which a life of simplicity and innocence procures: a condition rarely experienced in the world. Even when it is not altogether in our own power to remove the obstacles to this inward peace; to oppose upon all occasions the victory of the world; the idea of sacrificing to God, is very natural and affecting to every warm and virtuous heart. Why, therefore, are we so continually discontented and miserable? Why do we so frequently complain of the want of happiness and enjoyment, if it be not because we

\* The person here alluded to was LORD WARWICK, a young man of very irregular life, and perhaps of loose opinions; ADDISON, for whom he did not want respect, had very diligently endeavoured to reclaim him; but his arguments and expostulations had no effect: when he found his life near its end, therefore, he directed the young lord to be called, and made this last experiment to reclaim him. What effect this awful scene had on the earl is unknown; he likewise died himself in a short time. THE TRANSLATOR.



permit the mind to be imposed upon by the false appearances of things ; because sensuality frequently predominates over reason ; because we prefer deceitful gifts and fleeting pleasures to more essential and permanent enjoyments ; if it be not, in one word, because the bosom is not sensible of the august precepts of our holy religion ?

But he who has studied the doctrines of the gospel, who has meditated upon them in silence, has nothing more to desire, provided he is at last sensible of the kind of character which he forms in the world, of that which he may acquire in Solitude and of that which it is his duty to attain. If he is inclined to think like a philosopher, and live like a christian, he will renounce the poisoned pleasures of that world which enervate his mind, banish every serious thought, and prevent the heart from rising to its God. Disgusted with the frivolous chimeras of vanity and folly, he retires to a distance from them to contemplate his own character, to elevate his mind to virtuous resolutions, and to resign himself more entirely and with greater permanency to the emotions of his heart. If he continue to sail upon that tempestuous sea, still he will with prudence avoid the rocks and sands of life ; will turn, during the storm, from those dangers, by which he may be wrecked ; and feel less joy in those hours when he sails in a fair wind and favourable sky, than in those when he eludes the perils which surrounded him.

To the man who has accustomed his mind silently to collect its thoughts, the hours which



he consecrates to God in Solitude are the happiest of his life. Every time we silently raise our minds to God, we are carried back into ourselves. We become less sensible of the absence of those things on which we placed our happiness; and experience much less pain in retiring from the noise of the world to the silence of Solitude. We acquire, by degrees, a more intimate knowledge of ourselves, and learn to look into the human breast with a more philosophic eye. We scrutinize our character with greater severity, feel with higher sensibility the necessity of reforming our conduct, and reflect more maturely on that which is the end of our lives. If we know those things which render our actions more acceptable in the sight of God, it ought to satisfy the minds of men that we do good for their sakes; but every good work admits of so many secondary views, that every motive must necessarily depend upon the directions of the heart. Every good action, without doubt, conveys quietude to the breast, but is this quietude always pure? Was not the mind merely actuated by the consideration of profane and worldly views to gratify a transient passion; or influenced by self-love rather than by the feelings of brotherly affection? We certainly discuss our thoughts and actions much better, and probe the emotions of the heart with greater sincerity, when we select for the examination of great and important truths those hours when we are alone before God.

It is thus that in Solitude we renounce our intimate connection with men to look back upon the transactions of life, to discuss our conduct in



the world, to prepare for ourselves a more rational employment in future, and to render an account of those actions we have yet to perform. It is thus that the wounds which we have received in the hostilities of life are healed. In the intervals of a religious retiremeent, virtuous resolutions are more easily acquired; the heart is more easily appeased; and we discover with greater certainty the safe road through all the formidable perils of life. It is thus that we are never less alone than when no human being is near us, because we are then in the presence of Him whose will it is of the highest importance to our happiness to obey.

SOLITUDE always call us from weakness to power, from seduction to resistance, from that which is present to that which is to come. Although men do not always enter into Solitude to commune with God, it is nevertheless true that they willingly quit noisy and tumultuous assemblies to enter into the quietude of his tranquil house, that they may not be for ever obliged to lend themselves to pleasures which possess neither delicacy nor morality. In every peaceful moment of our existence we are more immediately under the eye of Him whom it is so important to us to please, and who observes the sage in his silent meditations.

The apostles of society raise every where a continual clamour, as if they had matters of very high importance to transact in the world. Every one ought certainly to do more than the strict line of duty calls upon him to perform; but unhappily, we all do less than our duty, and leave the affairs of the world to go on as they



may. The energy necessary to the performance of great actions, elevation of character, and stability and firmness in virtue, are no where so easily acquired as in Solitude, and never so efficaciously as by RELIGION.—Religion disengages the heart from every vain desire, renders it tranquil under the pressure of misfortunes, humble before God, bold before men, and teaches it to rely with confidence upon the protection of Providence. Solitude and religion refine all our moral sentiments, while we remain uninfected with the leaven of fanaticism; and at the conclusion of a life passed in the practice of every virtue, we receive the reward for all the hours which we have consecrated to God in silence; of that constant and religious zeal with which we have raised towards him pure hands and a chaste heart.

The desire for the things of this world disappears whenever we acquire sufficient courage boldly to resign ourselves to the sentiment, that the actual state of lasting content and constant satisfaction of the soul has probably some analogy to the joys of eternity. A complete liberty to be and to do whatever we please, because that in heaven, in those regions of love and kindness, we cannot possess an unjust or improper inclination; a life of innocence; a justification of the ways of Providence; an implicit confidence in God; an eternal communion with those whom our souls loved on earth; are, at least, the wishes and the hopes which we may be, I trust, permitted in our worldly apprehensions to indulge, and which so agreeably flatter our imagination. But these hopes and wishes, which,



at present, shed a glimmering light, must remain like dreams and visions of the mind, until the tomb, thick clouds, and darkness, no longer hide eternity from human eyes, until the veil shall be removed, and THE ETERNAL reveals to us those things which no eyes have ever seen, which no ear has ever heard, which have never entered into the heart of man; for with silent submission I acknowledge, that eternity, to human foresight, is like that which the colour of purple appeared to be in the mind of a blind man, who compared it to the *sound of a trumpet*\*.

In this world, full of restraints and embarrassments, of troubles and of pains, the enjoyments of liberty, leisure and tranquility, are of inestimable value; every one sighs to obtain them, as the sailor sighs at sea for land, and shouts with triumph when he sees it; but in order to be sensible of their worth, it is necessary to have felt the want of them. We resemble the inhabitants of *Terra Firma*, who cannot conceive an idea of the feelings which fill the bosom of a navigator. For myself, I do not

\* Men, in general, fondly hope in eternity for all that is flattering to their taste, inclinations, desires, and passions on earth. I therefore entirely concur in opinion with a celebrated German philosopher, M. GARVE, that those persons cannot possess humility of heart who hope that God will hereafter reward them with riches and honours. It was these sentiments which occasioned a young lady of Germany, extremely handsome, to say, she hoped to carry with her into the next world a habit of fine silver tissue, zoned with feathers, and to walk in heaven on carpets of rose-leaves spread upon the firmament. This, also, was the reason why, in a full assembly of women of fashion, where the question was agitated, whether marriages were good to all eternity, they all unanimously exclaimed, *God preserve us from it.*



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know a more comfortable notion, than that eternity promises a constant and uninterrupted tranquillity, although I perfectly feel that it is not possible to form any idea of the nature of that enjoyment which is produced by a happiness without end. An eternal tranquillity is the highest happiness of my imagination, for I know of no felicity upon earth that can equal *peace of mind*.

Since therefore internal and external tranquillity is upon earth an incontestible commencement of *beatitude*, it may be extremely useful to believe, that in a rational and moderate absence from the tumults of society we may acquire faculties of the soul which are elements of that happiness we expect to enjoy in the world to come.

I now conclude my Reflections upon the Advantages of Solitude to the Heart. May they give greater currency to useful sentiments, to consolatory truths, and contribute, in some degree, to diffuse the enjoyment of a happiness which is so much within our reach! All my desires will then be satisfied. As for the rest, let every one live according to his inclination, exercise VIRTUE where he pleases, and procure at his option PLEASURE, in the enjoyment of which he will be certain of receiving, both here and hereafter, the approbation of God and his own conscience.

THE END.



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